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Inside: Gulf War Syndrome, poetry for Peltier, &  
exclusive 1969 & '91 interviews with Allen Ginsberg

Vol. 32 #2 (350)

Fall 1997

\$2.00

# Fifth Estate

Cover art: Stephen Goodfellow



P. 15

**SWAMP FEVER:**  
Primitivism & the Ideological Vortex





# Glowing in the Gulf: Drugged Soldiers & Radiation

## U.S. armaments and innocations may have caused Gulf War Syndrome

by Mitchel Cohen

**F**or years, the U.S. government has denied that the Gulf War Syndrome exists, refusing to admit the severity of illnesses suffered by tens of thousands of veterans of that conflict. Recent studies, however, show that the soldiers' illnesses are indeed real, and troops deployed to the Gulf were more than three times likely as U.S. soldiers elsewhere to suffer chronic diarrhea, joint pain, skin rashes, fatigue, depression, and memory loss.

Many veterans also suffer shooting pains during sexual intercourse, severe nausea, chest pains, general weakness, wasting disease, burning semen (reported by both male veterans and their sexual partners), blistering, swelling, chronic fatigue, and serious birth defects and illnesses (leukemia, cancers) in their children. Unfortunately, many vets are buying the U.S. government's new line: that these illnesses—Gulf War Syndrome—were caused by exposure to Iraqi nerve gas in early 1991.

As it turned out, however, Iraq never used nerve gas during the war. So, it's time for the U.S. government's fallback position: Perhaps the U.S. military accidentally blew up Iraqi nerve gas canisters when it bombed various sites.

By accident? With our fabled "smart bombs," originally reported to hit 93 percent of their targets with pinpoint accuracy?

Those dastardly Iraqis, placing deadly nerve gas canisters beneath "our" missiles! As poet Diane di Prima once remarked, "Get your cut throat off my knife!" It was not until late 1996 the Pentagon acknowledged "that more than 20,000 American troops may have been exposed to low doses of the nerve gas sarin after the demolition of an Iraqi ammunition depot in March 1991," after the official

shoddy investigation into the more than fifteen incidents in which nerve gas and other chemical agents were detected by American troops, and, according to a New York Times report, for "conduct[ing] a superficial investigation . . . of American soldiers' [claims] that they were exposed to clouds of Iraqi chemical or biological weapons in the war."

Earlier this year, a group of scientists at the University of Texas reported that "exposure to combinations of chemicals, including pesticides and low levels of nerve gas, were probably responsible for the health problems of gulf war veterans" (*NY Times*, 5/14/97), an assertion immediately questioned by the Pentagon.

The British government, on the other hand, has now clearly stated that "OPs"—derived from a class of compounds known as organophosphates, which are also the chief ingredients in many pesticides and herbicides—were the cause of Gulf War Syndrome among its soldiers.

### Numbers don't add up

Still, the numbers don't add up; "only" 20,000 troops, hardly enough to account for the huge numbers of complaints from Gulf veterans—no U.S./U.N. officials or media even bother to assess the effects on Iraq's population—were exposed to the sole acknowledged U.S. destruction of an Iraqi weapons storage facility, the one at Kamisiyah, on March 4 and 10, 1991.

Not only are there "several mysterious gaps" in the military's "otherwise meticulous combat logs" for the dates on which the Army's 37th Engineer Battalion blew up the depot, but the U.S. military command, including Generals Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf, refused to order the use of protective gear for soldiers in the area, claiming such an order would

spread panic through the ranks. Schwarzkopf, commander of U.S. Gulf War forces, denies U.S. troops were exposed to biological or chemical weapons.

With the White House panel dismissing claims of the 24th Naval Mobile Construction Battalion and other units concerning their positive readings for mustard gas, stating that "the evidence does not show that chemicals wafted over most of the soldiers who are now reporting ailments" and that, "Theater-wide contamination is highly unlikely," this fallback position is also beginning to unravel.

### Um, It Was The U.S.

How did Iraq get its hands on nerve gas and other biological and chemical agents? Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein, bought the nerve gas on the world market. What spawn of Satan would manufacture such despicable biological and chemical weapons, let alone sell them to Saddam? Um, it was the U.S. government.

When U.S. President George Bush condemned the threatened use of chemical and biological weapons by Saddam, he knew exactly what Iraq's arsenal consisted of since in his former capacity as head of the CIA (and later as Vice President), Bush himself had approved regular U.S. shipments of material needed to make biological and chemical weapons to Iraq.

These toxins included E.coli, salmonella, and bacteria causing anthrax, gas gangrene and brucellosis.<sup>1</sup> Bush also knew the U.S. had long been experimenting with drugs, as yet untested in the field, to counter them.

Knowledge of Iraq's biological and chemical weapons capability served Bush well. They functioned as a propaganda basis for vilifying Iraq to such a degree that the U.S., along with Britain, France and Germany, was able to get away with atrocity after atrocity in a war more properly called the "Gulf Massacre" without concerning itself with civilian casualties and "collateral damage." In the course of restructuring the production and control of world oil, the U.S. military was able to

test new weapons, protective devices and anti-biological warfare medications in the field on its own soldiers.

Most people assumed that if any nerve gas had been used it would have to be Saddam's doing. No corporate paper or tv newscast has dared suggest it was the U.S. that used dangerous biological and chemical warfare agents in the Gulf.

That thought remains beyond the pale even today, despite the long history of U.S. biological and chemical warfare and experimentation.<sup>2</sup> Saddam, after all, was portrayed as the war criminal, "worse than Hitler," not George Bush. The U.S. President, upholding democracy and peace, ordered use of thousands of tons of napalm, air-fuel explosives, and uranium-encased shells, raining holy terror upon Iraq in 1991. 250,000 people (mostly civilians) were killed outright by the U.S. bombardment and another 750,000 have died as a result of the U.N. international embargo spearheaded by the U.S.

### Thinking The Unthinkable

In 1969 President Nixon issued an Executive Order banning biological weapons, saying: "Biological weapons have massive, unpredictable, and potentially uncontrollable consequences. They may produce global epidemics and impair the health of future generations."

Despite the ban, in January 1977 UPI reported a soldier had been "accidentally exposed to the hallucinogenic agent BZ" at the Dugway Proving Grounds, and hospitalized with hallucinations and rapid heartbeat. He had been exposed while opening cluster bombs containing the BZ. The press concerned itself only with the danger of the gas leaking out.

Who authorized the production of cluster bombs containing hallucinogenic agents, against the provisions of the Geneva Convention, to which the United States is a signatory? That such weapons still are being manufactured and sold despite presidential edicts and international treaties lost in the midst of the war's mindless boosterism.

In 1981, I interviewed soldiers in the U.S. Army Reserve who told of being "volunteered" for special duty. "Dozens of soldiers from my Long Island unit," one soldier told me, "were exposed to various hallucinogens in a gas form. We tried on and tested different types of gas masks. Lots of people got sick." This soldier, a right-winger with whom I've managed to keep in touch over the years, went on to serve in the Gulf. He now suffers from Gulf War Syndrome himself, and is a leading critic of U.S. government duplicity on this matter.

Those interviews took place sixteen years ago. Have things improved? According to one news report, in November 1991 a "tiny amount" of deadly VX nerve agent leaked from a storage tank at an army ammunition plant outside of Indianapolis, Indiana. One-fiftieth of a standard drop of the agent—approximately the volume of the tip of a sharpened pencil—leaked from a faulty valve. A single drop could kill a person in three to ten minutes. The question lingers: why are such neurotoxins continuing to be manufactured? And why were they sold to Iraq?

To understand Gulf War Syndrome and to make sense of the missing military logs, the lies within lies, we have to stop falling for the government's stories and begin to think the unthinkable: that U.S. soldiers during the Gulf War, as they have been throughout history, were involuntary vic-

Continued on page 30



# Tales From The Planet



## "Partial" Victory for McLibel Two

At the conclusion of the longest trial in British history, McDonald's has exacted a quarter-pound of flesh from two radical environmentalists the burger corporation claimed libeled it.

The presiding magistrate declared in a 1,000-word judgement that the defendants, Helen Steel and Dave Morris, the McLibel Two, "partially" libeled the \$30 billion a year corporation by publishing and distributing the 6-sided factsheet entitled, "What's Wrong With McDonald's?: Everything They Don't Want You To Know." The judge awarded the company \$96,000 in damages. Partially is the key word, however, since he upheld the defendants on several important charges leveled against McGarbage in the pamphlet.

The judge surprised a London courtroom packed with journalists, supporters of the defendants, McDonald's top executives and their lawyers by declaring that the two members of Greenpeace London proved their contentions that McDonald's "exploits children" through advertising and promotions, that the company's claim their food is nutritious is deceptive, that McDonald's is "culpably responsible" for cruelty to animals, and that it pays low wages to its UK employees and is anti-union.

The court heard almost two and half years of testimony from 180 witnesses about the effect of the company's policies on human health, the environment, farm animals, the Third World and McDonald's employees from experts in the respective fields, corporation executives, and even company paid infiltrators. The case was tried without a jury after the judge ruled the issues were too complex for an average person.

McDonald's spent \$15 million on the trial, but still suffered a public relations disaster. The hearings received international publicity, and the pamphlet in question, which had a circulation of only several thousand prior to the trial, has subsequently had two million distributed in England alone. Also, the McLibel web site, McSpotlight.org, which has had 12 million hits, reproduces the pamphlet plus trial transcripts.

Steel and Morris emerged from the courtroom waving copies of the pamphlet, pledging to keep distributing them. The next day, demonstrations were held at McDonald's franchises across the world. Contact them at McLibel Support Campaign, 5 Caledonian Rd., London N1 9DX, UK.

## Paul Watson Freed

Paul Watson, Greenpeace cofounder and president of the Sea Shepherd Conser-

vation Society, imprisoned in Holland on a Norwegian extradition request was released June 9 by a Dutch judge.

Watson was arrested in Amsterdam April 2 on an Interpol warrant requested by Norway. The Oslo government wants him to serve a 120-day sentence for sinking a Norwegian whaling vessel following a trial where he was convicted in *absentia*. Other charges stem from an incident involving the Sea Shepherd boat, *Whales Forever*, which was rammed, depth-charged and fired upon by a Norwegian destroyer. Norway claims its ship was rammed by Watson although video footage of the 1994 incident and the accounts of numerous journalists who witnessed the confrontation in international waters put the blame on the much larger Norwegian vessel.

Watson, a vehement critic of illegal whaling by Norway, was the focus of an intense international public and celebrity campaign. A full-page ad in the May 23 edition of the Dutch newspaper *Volkskrant* featured Pierce Brosnan, Cher, Jane Seymour, Steven Seagal, Mick Jagger and Chrissie Hynde among others demanding his release. At a May 16 Amsterdam concert, Zoli Tégla, IGNITE vocalist, led a crowd of 100,000 in chanting "Free Paul Watson." There were also international demonstrations the day of the hearing.

Lisa Distefano, Sea Shepherd international director thinks Norway made a big mistake arresting the well-known activist who has been fighting to stop whaling and illegal fishing for 25 years. "By trying to manipulate the Dutch justice system for their own ends," she says, "they focused unwanted attention on their illegal whale slaughter for Japanese sushi in defiance of the global moratorium."

Sea Shepherd is at P.O. Box 628, Venice CA 90294; 310-301-7325.

## Burn All Flags!

Now that the political system has been exposed as a racket for the corporations and international high rollers (the Democrats sell off the White House to the highest bidder, while the Republicans offer the Congress for sale), the politicians have reintroduced the pathetic flag desecration constitutional amendment hoping the public's attention will be diverted from the never ending influence peddling scandals in Washington.

The drive for a change in the constitution came about after the conservative U.S. Supreme Court held that laws forbidding flag burning were unconstitutional, since such acts were political speech, protected by the First Amendment. The problem is, no one is doing much flag burning these days, and haven't been since it was the RCP's hobby during the Gulf War protests six years ago.



54 people from a San Francisco Bay Area cluster of anarchist affinity groups, Homes Not Jails, and several homeless activists were arrested after occupying, barricading, and sitting-in outside of three vacant homes on the Presidio, a former army base. They demanded that the 466 units kept empty by the National Park Service be used for the city's desperate need for housing. Last year, 154 homeless people died on San Francisco's streets. Earlier that afternoon, homeless, tenant, anti-poverty, anarchist and environmental groups held a rally, followed by a 300-person march carrying giant puppets and cardboard effigies of homes. To support them, contact the Tenants Union at 415-282-5525. —photo: Anders Corr

Numerous people we've spoken to around the country agree, if the political opportunists who rule this country manage to pass this obvious attempt at limiting free speech and action, let's make it a problem; a *big one*. Public defiance would be good although private acts of desecration, the remainders of which could be mailed to politicians, would make the point as well. Can you imagine the reaction of Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, one of the amendment's sponsors, if he received thousands of packages containing burnt flags? Burn all flags!

## Cove/Mallard Blockade

Summer 1997 has seen several significant developments in the campaign to end the Cove/Mallard timber sales and protect this vital piece of the lower 48's last Big Wild from destruction. An environmental law suit, the last legal remedy, was dismissed by a state judge, and an appeal won't be heard until January 1998.

While the lopsided wheels of justice are stuck in the same old rut, committed people are busy putting themselves between the chainsaws of the U.S. Forest Service and the forests of Cove/Mallard.

On June 15th, as the protection of elk calving season expired, two brave souls perched in tripods, blocking the logging road to one of the sales. The protesters remained for three days before being plucked off with a cherry picker, and jailed.

Others declared July 4, "Forest Independence Day," and set up a blockade on the road to the Jack Creek timber sale. Activists were in 35-foot high structures designed to force law enforcement to risk lives if they try to take them down. Others were locked to cement barrels buried in the road. On Sept. 17, officers roughly arrested five people in a day long operation. The way is now clear for 200 planned clearcuts unless the courts step in.

Because Cove/Mallard is an area of unprotected national forest that links several major biological corridors, it is one of the most significant timber conflicts in the Northern Rockies this decade. This second longest blockade in forest defense

history, linked radical environmentalists with anarchists, creating a free state on the road of the Jack timber sale.

Contact the Cove/Mallard Coalition, P.O. Box 8968, Moscow ID: 208-882-9755; cove@moscow.com for updates.

## Geronimo Freed

Ex-Black Panther and political prisoner for over a quarter-century, Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), was released from a California dungeon June 10. A county judge ruled what every sensible person who looked at the case knew: Geronimo had been denied a fair trial in 1972. Pratt was framed on murder charges after being fingered by a police informer as part of the FBI code-named CONINTELPRO conspiracy to silence the Panthers.

The judge's ruling came after a month  
Continued on page 35

## Fifth Estate

The Fifth Estate is a cooperative, nonprofit project, publishing since 1965. The people who produce it are a group of friends who do so neither to secure wages nor as an investment in the newspaper industry, but to encourage resistance to an unjust and destructive society.



The Fifth Estate (ISSN No. 0015-0800) is published quarterly at 4632 Second Ave., Detroit, Michigan 48201 USA; Phone (313) 831-6800. Our office hours vary, so please call before visiting. Subscriptions are \$8.00 for four issues; \$10.00 foreign including Canada. Periodical Mail postage paid at Detroit, Michigan. No copyright. No paid advertisements.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: Fifth Estate, 4632 Second Ave., Detroit MI 48201 USA.



## "Sing it, shout it, scream it down—the news is out, people, you own the town."

from the Aug. 1, 1967 Fifth Estate

You know that it would be untrue / You know that I would be a liar / If I was to say to you / "Girl, we can't get much higher" — / Come on baby light my fire / Come on baby light my fire / Gonna set the night on / FI-YUR

"Light My Fire" — The Doors

by John Sinclair

"Light My Fire" rises through the radio ranks for weeks and, when it hits number one on the stations, the people respond and burn the city down. Or play Archie Shepp's *Fire Music* album as background music for the Detroit purification: the scope and feeling of the people's mood is there; an elegy for Malcolm X.

The television people are scared and stand frowning in doorways, sit clenching their teeth in front of their sets, as the news makes its way through the burning city—the police can't hold them, the state police can't hold them; "Bring in the Federal Troops, we gotta stop them crazy niggers before they tear the whole city apart and carry it back to their living rooms piece by piece."

Soldiers in battle green and tommyguns hold down the banks and furniture stores where there's still furniture, gun shops, troops massed at the Woodward Hudson's entrances to keep the plastic castle safe from lawless, pillaging, looting criminals the governor and the President of the United States call them on TV, and still the fires burn, the stores fall, the people set the night on fire.

No, baby, it's not a "race riot," or anything as simple as that. People just got tired of being hassled by police and cheated by businessmen and got out their equalizers and went to town. The mode of the music changed and the walls of the city shook and fell. Yes, they did. Oh, it was Robin Hood Day in merry olde Detroit, the first annual city-wide all-free fire sale, and the people without got their hands on the goods.

Whole families climbed through A&P windows and picked the stores clean, carting home the groceries they'd been paying their lives for all these years. Free furniture and color TVs, guitars and leather coats, shoes and clothes and liquor. And when their energies turned from smashing the stores they would go for the police, and not, you'll notice, their neighbors. The dirty, rotten hated police who came to bring a "law and order" made for the owners and bosses and bigshots to protect their precious property. Just now someone tells me, "If there was any hatred, it came from the cops—the people weren't hostile at all."

The people just wanted what was theirs all along. They'd been waiting long enough, and it was time now to do it. On a lovely hot Sunday morning they saw the hated po-lice dragging off 80 people from a blind pig, and they'd had enough. This country is built on a powderkeg of plunder and greed, and the fuse burned down, that's all. The people watched the Man's TV and knew it was a lie—THEY didn't live like that, and there was no way in hell

the Man could make them believe his lies any more. Their frustration and desperation mounted until they couldn't get no higher, they were invisible now, got no secrets to conceal. When you ain't got nothin',

you got nothin' to lose. A white boy said that. And the stores came down.

The jails are full—the City, the County, the House of Correction, those arraigned were taken to Jackson Prison to be held for trial, those who just came in were held in empty DSR buses until the jails had room for them. The system was breaking down. The President got upon TV with R. Strange MacNamara weeping over his shoulder and whined for "law and order." Riots broke out in other cities all over the country. The television programs began to look stupider and less human than usual next to the reality news reports every hour. The reality news had stars and extras the folks back home had never been allowed to see. And these new stars were all "criminals," thousands of them sit rotting in jail until they were allowed their "day in court."

The people ruled the city for a minute, and may still be ruling when this is printed. The hypocrisy of "democratic capitalism" stood exposed, naked and ugly. The troops protected the owners' possessions and shot the people down in the streets for money. Sing it, shout it, scream it down—the news is out, people, you own the town.

## Riot Eyewitness

by Bob Serling

There was a small integrated group sitting in front of our apartment building, talking like they do every night, and the police came by and saw them and said, "Get in the house, white boy, and you too, nigger."

The police and National Guard came by in trucks and told us to get in the house or they'd kill us. Someone shouted it was too bad that there weren't any Indians around and the police started firing shots into the building. They didn't hit anyone, but there are marks all over the apartment. They then went up and down Prentiss shooting at the buildings. When the National Guard left, people started throwing bottles from the roofs so that if they came back, they'd get flat tires. A couple of carloads



The July 1967 Detroit rebellion left 42 dead, hundreds of millions of dollars in damages and scars still unhealed today. The Fifth Estate office was in a hard-hit area; the Aug. 1, 1967 issue featured first-hand accounts from staff members who went directly into the fray while half the city was still in flames.

## Excerpts: FE's Coverage of the Detroit 1967 Rebellion from our Aug. 1, 1967 issue

### "Get The Big Stuff"

by Peter Werbe

"The chickens are coming home to roost."

—Malcolm X, Nov. 22, 1963

Malcolm was right, of course, and the chickens have come home so many ways since that grim day four years ago. Vietnam, Malcolm's own death, riots across the country and now the biggest chicken of them all—the Detroit riot. Detroit always does things up in a big way.

The Warren Forest area near Wayne University was relatively untouched by the holocaust. The Fifth Estate office at Warren and John Lodge was unharmed as were the adjacent offices of the Artists' Workshop, Trans-Love Energies, and the Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam.

Our newspaper office sported a "Soul brother" sign and two large banners were



Sign above the Artists' Workshop & FE office. FE photo/C.T. Walker

hung from Trans Love reading, "Peace on Earth" and "Burn, Baby, Burn."

(FE note: The sign we put up on our office worked for us with neighborhood people, but not with the National Guard who lobbed a tear gas grenade through our window making the premises unusable for days.)

Hippie and political residents of the Warren Forest area reacted to the situation just like their poorer neighbors—they took whatever wasn't nailed down.

They joined Negroes and southern whites in cleaning out the stores on Trumbull and Forest, which now lie in ashes, the Kroger's on Second and Prentiss and other stores. Looters came back laden with goodies, swapping stories of harrowing experiences with the guardsmen and bartering goods that they had in excess. The mayor was right about the "carnival-like atmosphere." Everything was free.

Kae Halonen, a resident of W. Hancock, described a scene of integrated looting. "There was complete cooperation between the races in their common endeavor," she said. "There were children carrying toys they never would have been able to afford."

Detroit's Communications Company, which distributes leaflets in the area, put out a broadside that advertised "Detroit's Summer Plunder Festival," and advised residents to "Get the Big Stuff" and "Loot—it's the American Way." One hippie unlocked an abandoned gas station and was pumping free gasoline to anyone who came along.

When asked if looting wasn't contrary to the hippie philosophy of love, John Sinclair, head of Trans-Love and Fifth Estate staffer replied, "We told the

merchants before the riot they should give everything away, but they wouldn't listen.

"It's a little out of hand, but it's beautiful," said one hippie. "It looks like Rome burning," said another as he observed the city in flames from a roof top.

H. Rap Brown, chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, who was arrested July 26 for inciting to riot, said, "We (Negroes) built this country and we're going to burn it down."

And it looks like they will if Detroit is an example.

As I write the toll is 38 dead (FE note: the final toll was 42 fatalities, almost all at the hands of the cops and troops); injuries in the thousands; 1,500 fires; almost 2,000 looted stores; 15,000 troops in the city; over 3,100 arrests; and about a billion dollars in property damage.

That's a hell of a chicken.



A brief survey  
of American  
society's  
fundamental  
ambivalence  
toward the land,  
and the  
restlessness  
and rootlessness  
of modern life



# On the Road to Nowhere: Notes on the New Nomadism

by David Watson

"After all this long journey . . . here  
it was all come to nothing, everything  
all busted up and ruined."

Huckleberry Finn

Looking to change my life, at the age of nineteen I decided to pack my belongings into a knapsack and hitch-hike to California. Two miraculous rides carried me through prairies, deserts and mountains into Los Angeles to a friend's place at the edge of Hollywood. In those days, at least, California was considered the ultimate destination for every dream of freedom and opportunity, spiritual and economic.

In one sense, I was following a pattern: it is said that sixty percent of U.S. citizens either arrived here through the immigration center at Ellis Island in New York Harbor, or are descended from them. At least my mother's father seems to have followed that route. As

with much of my background, I know little about him—a fairly common situation, evidence of the weightless character of life here.

We Americans are thought to be rootless escapees from every other continent—nomadic, free spirits who get ourselves going when the going gets tough—pulling up stakes and moving on to the next ridge or mountaintop, the next adventure. The country is billed as a Promised Land, a nation of immigrants who made good. (Usually overlooked by this idea are the peoples conquered by the invaders or forcibly dragged here in chains.)

Movement and migration, always a large part of the human experience, have taken on a dramatically different character since early modern times. The rapid pace, enormous dimensions, and universal permanence of movement have become characteristic of what is now a global urban-industrial civilization. The European invasion of America largely financed the emergence of capitalism. In the process, old cultures were entirely uprooted, indigenous peoples slaugh-

tered and displaced, and whole regions pillaged.

It was the unsettling of Europe, Lewis Mumford once remarked, that brought about the settlement of America. Those who came here were themselves uprooted, detribalized people; settlement was itself vastly unsettling, what Frederick W. Turner, in his book *Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness*, has called "a spiritual story . . . of a civilization that had substituted history for myth as a way of understanding life."

In the opening to his book, Turner recalls finding himself in the Black Hills of South Dakota, the sacred Paha Sapa of the Lakota Sioux (recently slated by the U.S. government as a "national sacrifice area" for mining, energy production and waste dumping). In a sudden flash he recognized how utterly estranged he was from the place, how it could never have the same deep meaning for him it has for the Lakota—not because of the amount of time they have been there but for the way they have lived there.

According to Turner, western civilization's turn from cyclic myth to-

ward an obsession with linear time, and hence with geographic expansion to fulfill its history, underlies the frenzied outward movement of western civilization in general and American civilization in particular. The archaic myth of traditional peoples, which we might visualize as a circle, was transformed into a new mystique of history: a single line, an ever-receding horizon. This turn toward history banished the sacred from nature, Turner argues, making the Europeans "alienated sojourners in a spiritually barren world where the only outlet for the urge to life was the restless drive onward." Such spiritual repression inevitably brought with it colossal levels of violence toward the world they encountered; the westward wanderers' testimonies of "lavish and exhaustless" abundance, Turner writes, were also narratives "of waste, destruction, and frantic despoilation."

## Pioneer ideology

Ambivalence toward the land set the tragic conditions of the American experience. The sentimental idea of paradise—a lush, abundant garden—had its corollary in the image of an immense, threatening wilderness. Incapable of



loving the land for what it was, the invaders had to "improve" it, pulverizing and reconstituting everything in their path. Alexis de Tocqueville likened their advance to a march, "turning the course of rivers, peopling solitudes, and subduing nature."

Tocqueville observed the tendency of early nineteenth century Americans to abandon a homestead before even finishing the roof. Typically, the settler was sustained by the idea that the frontier—a middle ground between corrupt civilization and chaotic wilderness—would bring redemption. The utopian urge for movement and change paradoxically reflected a profound desire to set down roots. But the market system at the core of North American ideology and identity, based as it is on abstract economic exchange, is inherently destabilizing and must inevitably undermine roots. Thus each frontier was eventually exhausted and abandoned by the same forces which caused it to be settled in the first place.

Official history says the devastation of the original lands and peoples was a necessary evil to bring about a vital civilization. So deeply ingrained is the mystique of manifest destiny that a 1992 Smithsonian exhibit on the quinquennial of Columbus, which merely referred to the incontrovertible fact of genocide and ecological devastation brought about by European conquest, was severely censured by politicians and pundits. The pioneer ideology—a New World version of holocaust denial—remains sacrosanct in many quarters. Every child grows up with it; Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone, and 1950s and '60s television cowboy shows such as *Bonanza* and *Gunslinger* provided my generation's archetypal heroes, larger-than-life men bringing light to the darkness. We grew up on them, immersed ourselves in the blue light of their ideological shadow play. In this regard we were little different from nineteenth century people who read dime novels and followed frontier reports.

Commonly compared to Columbus and Balboa by the publicists responsible for creating his legend, Daniel Boone was the prototypical folk hero of the national drama. His characteristic misanthropy and urge to escape to the frontier became a familiar theme in American popular culture, from Huck Finn's meander down the Mississippi to Beat novelist Jack Kerouac's pilgrimage west in *On the Road*. Boone's statement that he left "domestic happiness . . . to wander through the wilderness of America in quest of the country of Kentucke" reveals the preeminently masculine aspect of the American nomadic mystique. In this story, men abandon "domestic happiness" (a woman's world), with its trivial charms and effete corruptions, for the Great Adventure. Throughout the Boone tale, a sexually charged ambivalence toward the land is visible—his yearning for the "virgin wilderness" and his terror of and loathing for the actual place and the people already living there.

In fact, as historian Richard Drinnon has commented, "under [Boone's] handsome yellow buckskins . . . beat the heart of a land company agent." In his indispensable study *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Empire-Building and*

*Indian-Hating*, Drinnon reveals Boone as a land speculator and "professional empire builder" who "went in for body counts" of enemy dead after engaging in numerous punitive expeditions and raids against the locals. "We burnt them all to ashes," Boone writes in a typical account, representative of earlier and later wars against America's indigenous tribes and to future international wars as well. He and his cohorts "entirely destroyed their corn and other fruits, and every where spread a scene of desolation in the country," he reports almost laconically. Such desolation is the public secret underlying the Euroamerican pursuit of happiness.

#### Everyone must eat hamburgers

If Boone and his ilk were the inventions of real estate promoters, no less was that hero of American heroes, the cowboy. This occupation drew little attention until the cowboy as heroic figure was concocted by Buffalo Bill Cody for his Wild West Show at the end of the last century. By the time Cody was finished, the cowboy was synonymous with America; even the first celebrity cowboy, Cody's protégé Buck Taylor, had become an actor. Since then the actors, from John Wayne to Ronald Reagan, have come to supplant the reality; the myth firmly established, the Wild West has become a gargantuan, lucrative theme of the culture industry.

A cowboy hat and boots now afford masculine potency to their male wearer (and sexual allure to the occasional female), be it in Houston or New York City. Cowboy-inspired clothing is ubiquitous; upscale customers can even buy bluejeans said to have once been worn by "authentic" cowboys. The paraphernalia and symbols are employed not only to sell products like tobacco, alcohol and automobiles, but to sell the macho, individualistic and superficially independent mode of life that, as we are frequently reminded, makes the country great. There is now even a cowboy

channel on national cable television for the devoted. Quips western singer Bobby Bare, "Today being a 'cowboy' is more of an attitude than an occupation."

In former days the activities of cowboys represented just another get-rich-quick scheme of the settlers—a horde that first annihilated tens of millions of buffalo to starve out the natives before introducing livestock grazing. "Forage fever" paralleled gold fever, oil fever and other pecuniary thralls, with predictable results: grazing rivals, or surpasses, any other single factor in the ecological destruction of the American West. As Lynn Jacobs reports in his encyclopedic study on livestock grazing, *The Waste of the West*, the real national totem is not the eagle but the cow. One half of all U.S. land outside Alaska is grazed by livestock, mostly cattle, with another fifteen percent used as cropland to feed livestock. Half the water and forty percent of all plant food production go to livestock. The country, Jacobs argues, is a veritable cow factory.

In the American Eden, everyone must eat hamburgers; in the process, grasslands, brushlands, forests and deserts have been "cowburnt" and despoiled. According to U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates (which Jacobs considers very conservative), western rangelands are only about half as productive botanically as they were before the livestock invasion of the 1880s. Western rangeland is losing topsoil, mostly due to ranching, at a rate of five to perhaps twenty times as fast as it is being replaced.

Cattlemen had more than an environmental effect. After slaughtering the natives, they consolidated huge land holdings through theft and coercion. Since then, despite their minuscule numbers, they have dominated state and federal governments, fostering a "frontier justice" based on intimidation and violence—deputizing their cronies and imposing quick trials and quicker punish-

ments, where the sheriff and the judge wear cowboy hats. (In the 1992 Texas gubernatorial race, Democratic and Republican candidates ran on who would execute more criminals more swiftly. The Republican, a son of George Bush, claimed the higher number and won. But cowboy justice seems more popular everywhere in the U.S. today.)

The range war is in fact an apt replica of all aggressive capitalism, its fundamental war-of-all-against-all. The shoot-out and the hostile corporate buy-out are linked spiritually, as Turner might say, certainly symbolically, frequently right down to the western clothing worn by both sets of protagonists. Of course, the cattle barons are now often multinationals or giant eastern insurance companies. Despite the myth's images of neighborliness, community in the West is mostly an aggregate, dominated by the powerful, of atomized individuals, "alienated sojourners" relentlessly whipping and stripping the countryside to scrape off a profit. After being pushed onto reservations and seeing the land suffer under the onslaught of the whites, the Navajos believed their region to be literally bewitched. Anyone who has seen the hysteria on the floor of the Commodities Exchange, or its result on the landscape, might agree.

The romance of the horizon is a mirage concealing the boom-bust cycle and subsequent dust-bowls of the market. Restless and unsentimental, capital must constantly abandon yesterday's faded paradise to conquer the next or face collapse. The frontier is always somewhere else. Indeed, today's pilgrim may be fleeing yesterday's settlement—perhaps a town like Love Canal, New York, abandoned because of industrial contamination, or some fishing village in Alaska where oil washed up from the Exxon Valdez. Formerly the haven from a heartless world and the site of redemption, the American home, with its toxic leachate seeping through the basement wall, has itself become a kind of horrible condition to escape. In the beginning, the Indians were driven out with the justification that being nomadic, they could lay no claim to the land they occupied. But what came after was fragmentation, not stability, and a contempt for the land still visible in ugly Alaska frontier towns, the denuded industrial landscapes of the Rust Belt, and rural lands everywhere obliterated for "development."

#### Cowboys and astronauts

Looking honestly at the movements of indigenous nomadic peoples, we would mostly see a peregrination based on a profound awareness of and ability to live with the land rather than against it. Traditional nomads have a spiritual relationship with the land, moving in a kind of sacred circle, or perhaps in an ellipse; in their stories and their migrations they continually return to the source and center of the world.

In contrast, the modern "nomad" moves along a line, following a receding horizon, wrecking and abandoning along the way, never at home, always scheming the next move across shifting, breaking ice. Or maybe the movement is a circle, but it now goes from nowhere to nowhere, around and around like the subway line, or the circulation of

continued on next page



graphic: Richard Mock

**The romance of the horizon is a mirage concealing the boom-bust cycle and dust-bowls of the market. Restless and unsentimental, capital must constantly abandon yesterday's faded paradise to conquer the next or face collapse.**





graphic: Richard Mock

The railroad and telegraph were destined to "annihilate space and time," according to one observer. As the physical setting was indeed annihilated, wild nature lost its power to dominate the imagination (except increasingly as the site for automobile advertising), and only the machine remains. Today's post-modern nomad channel surfs or wanders in cyberspace, no longer worrying about the world outside or even believing it exists. Consumerism delivers paradise, and the miracles of abundance no longer come from loamy earth but from genetic engineering, space flight and the media. The land is now so displaced that the phantasms of bubble cities and an entirely engineered environment, like the Biosphere II experiment in Arizona, are received with enthusiasm and even hope.

The cowboy is now an astronaut, futures trader or cyberpunk; after porno-, space- and virtual reality-cowboys, it's hard to believe anyone pays him any attention. Yet the frontier idea still elicits loyalty, especially in the high tech mid-sized towns and rural areas of the West and the Sun Belt, where nationalistic, conservative, fundamentalist Christian forces are strongest. There, the old myths have found new vigor in a weird but potent mix of frontier and New Age values. And where the middle class is no longer fascinated by the pioneer, it chases Indian shadows in New Age healing rituals fashioned from purloined fragments of native religion. During the Persian Gulf War millions of Americans were drawn to the hugely successful film *Dances With Wolves*, a white man's romance about living among the Lakota, while the contemporary cavalry incinerated more recently demonized "savages" in the Midwest.

In his 1994 memoir of the Vietnam War, *In Pharaoh's Army*, Tobias Wolff relates how, determined to watch the 1967 *Bonanza* Thanksgiving special in style, he risked getting killed and perpetrated mayhem on Vietnamese civilians along the road in order to drive to a distant U.S. base to find a big screen television. In their refusal to come to terms with the place, he writes, the Americans at the base "had created a profound, intractable bog" smelling of roast turkey and overflowing latrines. In Vietnam, Wolff "saw something that wasn't al-

**As, the romance of the landscape has shifted to the machine, nature has lost its power over the imagination. Today's post-modern nomad channel surfs or wanders in cyberspace, no longer worrying about the world outside or even believing it exists.**

lowed for in our national myth—our capacity for collective despair." He wonders afterward, "Where were we, really?" (The question has been asked ever since Europeans first stumbled up on a Caribbean beach.) The *Bonanza* special turned out to be, as always, "a story of redemption—man's innate goodness brought to flower by a strong dose of opportunity, hard work, and majestic landscape." Like the American continent, Indochina paid a high price for the acting out of this story. But Wolff's question remains unanswered. We are too busy moving on.

#### We remain foreigners

As for moving on, I didn't last in California, and after a year or so returned to Detroit. But my family has been scattered to the winds, so it should not be any surprise that I began penning this essay on an airplane headed west to the Hawaiian island of Maui to visit my mother, who moved there twenty-five years ago to work, and then stayed. We're nomads, too.

Just during the last quarter century in which I have visited it, Hawai'i has provided a stunning lesson in the effects of our peculiar nomadism. A small and exquisitely beautiful place stolen from its original inhabitants, it continues to

undergo changes both rapid and horrendous. Development of every sort—military, industrial and commercial—is turning it into part Southern California, part Detroit. As I drove from the airport past Kahana Pond this time, I noticed the completion of a new development encroaching on a bird sanctuary there—a huge K-Mart discount store. (K-Mart headquarters in suburban Detroit had just laid off thirteen hundred workers.) There, by the edge of a new asphalt parking lot, stood a beautiful white egret—another immigrant—poking through debris for food, looking like a homeless person at a trash bin.

They "were careless people," Fitzgerald's protagonist Nick Carraway concludes about the people he meets in *The Great Gatsby*. "They smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made." I know the defiled wilderness has also become a common cultural motif. In certain post-modern circles, being "on the road to nowhere," as the Talking Heads song goes, is even counted as a blessing, however precarious. But our wandering comes at a great price—to egrets and to people. Throughout it all, we remain foreigners—in America and everywhere else.

It's true we can't go back to sacred circles long unraveled. We're already torn from our roots, we're made of myriad places. But space and time have not yet been altogether annihilated; it still may be possible to find out where we've been, where we really are, to recognize the integrity of the place and what it has lived. It's time to start cleaning up our mess, to "grasp rock and soil," as the Lakota writer Luther Standing Bear put it. It's time to come home.

*A different version of this essay appeared in the April 1995 issue of New Internationalist (subscriptions \$35.98 Canadian/12 issues from POB 30000 Stn BRM B, Toronto ON M7Y 7A2 Canada). It will be published in David Watson's new collection Against the Megamachine: Essays on Empire & Its Enemies (Autonomedia) in the fall of 1997.*

## Killer Cop's Appeal Fails

All of a sudden the media has discovered police brutality after years of denying its existence. The spotlight on this public secret came as a result of a particularly hideous incident of police torture recently by New York City cops who rival their L.A. counterparts for racism, brutal behavior and right wing politics.

In August, several of the city's finest beat a Haitian resident and then raped him with a plunger handle following a police raid on a nightclub. Now, even mainstream types are gnashing their teeth about "the few bad cops who give the rest a bad name," and are beside themselves urging the city to root out the "rogue cops."

The poor, minorities and social activists know that kicking the shit out of people is the cops' hobby, and brutality is the

rule, not the exception. Cries for reforming the police are nothing new; these calls usually follow particularly egregious episodes of police brutality or corruption. Of course, nothing ever really changes.

Trying to keep the sadists that gravitate to police forces on a shorter leash would take more political resolve than anyone in the ruling apparatus is willing to exhibit. The rulers know there's a limit to which you can punish your pit bull and still command his loyalty. The cops are the thin blue line between them and the unruly masses, labor strife or even revolutionary upsurges.

All over the country, cops who have choked, shot and beaten citizens to death, even under the most suspicious circumstances, routinely have charges against them quickly dismissed. Non-lethal brutality is so rampant that local municipalities allocate substantial sums to pay off victims who sue the police. Detroit, for instance, spent \$12 million last year to

settle such claims, but no disciplinary action was taken against the cops who committed the offenses.

The message is clear to the police. Unless you have the bad luck to get caught breaking someone's head on video or commit an act which horrifies the nation, you can usually get away with almost anything.

Unfortunately for two Detroit cops, Larry Nevers and Walter Budzyn, a couple of old-time shitkickers, their brutal bludgeoning to death of a black, unemployed steel worker, Malice Green, outraged this city. They were convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to long prison terms in 1993.

In August, the Michigan Supreme Court upheld the conviction of Nevers who smashed a two-pound flashlight on Green's head numerous times, but overturned that of Budzyn. Nevers' post-appeal statements confirmed every charge of racism leveled against him. He told the press he "had no

remorse" in Green's killing, but worse, called the Supreme Court, "more white people without spines."

He also questioned the validity of his conviction based on the racial composition of the jury. "The jury was made up of (Detroit ex-mayor) Coleman Young's peers, not my peers."

It couldn't be clearer. Killer cop Nevers wanted an all-white jury, one which would have had the "spine" to find him not guilty of a brutal murder.

Nevers' suburban supporters similarly expressed disbelief that a white cop could have been found guilty of killing a poor, black man.

Though the police aren't going to be reformed by this one conviction, it's heartening to have a cop who beat and killed so many citizens for a quarter century behind bars.

In answer to Nevers' whining about "justice," we say, "Rot in jail, Larry; then rot in hell."



## Despite Big Labor March & Court Ruling, Detroit Paper Strike Continues



IWW members join the June Mobilization in support of striking newspaper workers. Up to 100,000 participated. photo/Federico Arcos

I'm writing this on Labor Day 1997, the third such holiday since five newspaper unions began their strike against the *Detroit News* and *Free Press* in July 1995. The spirits of many of the strikers remain high, their weekly paper continues to publish, and a national AFL-CIO-sponsored march brought out tens of thousands of supporters, yet victory or even a return to work appears more and more distant.

According to many observers, the Detroit newspaper strike was probably lost in late 1995 when labor leaders agreed to the terms of a court injunction limiting picketing following months of intense activity at production and distribution sites (see "The Battle of Detroit," Summer 1996 FE).

Early in the walkout, thousands of strikers and supporters fought late night, toe-to-toe battles with hundreds of cops and newspaper security goons at the newspapers' printing plants. These picket line blockades successfully prevented newspapers from leaving the plants for up to eight hours, crippling the paper's important Sunday sales, and were the type of activity which could have brought about victory. However, the threat of heavy fines cowed the timid union leadership into backing down.

From that point on, official activity focused mainly on a relatively successful circulation and advertising boycott which has cost the papers \$250 million. However, Gannett and Knight-Ridder, the two media giants which own the dailies, are rich enough to sustain the loss, and are prepared to wait out the strikers, believing time is on their side. Small, admirable actions and constant harassment of scabs and the parent companies' directors have continued unabated, but in themselves aren't enough to win the strike.

On the eve of the Detroit June 21 national labor mobilization called by the AFL-CIO, things definitely looked better. That day, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) declared the papers were responsible for the strike through blatant unfair labor practices and said it would go

to court to ask that the locked-out workers be returned to their jobs. This legal vindication came amid an upbeat mood as the city braced for Action Motown '97, as the weekend events were dubbed. With the government taking the workers' side and thousands ready to march in the city, it looked like the strikers might have a chance to beat the intransigent corporations.

A coalition of militant strikers and supporters, however, correctly saw the march as largely symbolic and advocated a return to mass action to stop production as the only way to win the strike. They began preparing a call for blockades at the papers' two main printing plants, hoping to attract some of the expected 40,000 marchers to more radical activity.

They knew the official AFL apparatus did not approve of direct action, but were unprepared for the union federation's response. Besides intense pressure from union higher-ups, a Teamster lawyer told a coalition leader he was prepared to call the suburban police where one of the plants is located and disown the event. This is what union hacks call "playing hard ball," but to the strikers, cooperation with the hated Sterling Heights cops who had launched violent assaults on them at the *Detroit News* North plant in 1995, and are directly in the pay of the papers, was a betrayal of the first order. Still, the implication was clear; that without official union backing, the cops would have the go-ahead to bust heads and make arrests at any unsanctioned march.

The pressure was too great for newspaper union militants to withstand and they finally agreed to call off the night time marches. Angry, but undeterred, other members of the coalition including Detroit IWW members, knowing they could draw at least a hundred from local and out-of-town anarchists, decided to go ahead with the blockades.

Several thousand leaflets were distributed, but in the end only about 200 people showed up at the Riverfront plant on Friday evening while thousands of unionists from across the country partied at night

spots around town. Saturday night's protest was washed out by a torrential rain.

Saturday, June 21 was the big march. Estimates of the number attending were all over the board, from the official union count of 60-100,000 to a laughable 7,000 by *The Detroit News*. The IWW's *Industrial Worker* editor John Bekken vied for last place with the *News* by estimating in his August issue that only a paltry 25,000 marched.

The turnout was probably smaller than the AFL's high number, but larger than what Bekken and the *News* reported.

The strikers, particularly the writers, were highly indignant about the *News*' obviously politically motivated reporting of the numbers attending and moaned about a "lack of journalistic ethics." Their complaints are understandable, but things were no different when they were the official scribes in the days before the strike and routinely reduced the numbers attending protest demonstrations and misrepresented their message.

The June Mobilization was supposed to energize the strike, but instead protest activity fell off significantly in the days following. It was assumed that since the NLRB had requested an injunction ordering the papers to take the strikers back to work, it was a done deal since government board rulings usually prevail. However, to the surprise of only the strikers, a gutless liberal, Clinton-appointed federal judge refused the request and denied the injunction leaving the shocked workers still out on the street.

The unions had counted heavily on a court ordered callback as a justification for offering a so-called unconditional re-

turn to work in February. To many this looked like the surrender the papers had called for, but the company had no intention of displacing their docile staff of strikebreakers who had produced their paper for so long. Management has thus far only rehired about ten percent of the strikers, while the judge's decision is on appeal.

The newspaper strikers led the massive Detroit Labor Day march for the third year and again pledged to struggle until victory. The holiday itself, tucked conveniently away from international labor celebrations on May 1, brought out throngs of festive unionists, maybe as many as 200,000. They marched down Woodward Ave. accompanied by marching bands, old cars, clowns, and patriotic displays. Their numbers, if mobilized to militantly confront the papers instead of for a self-congratulatory parade through a deserted downtown, could easily win the newspaper strike.

However, it's clear the union heads have no intention of doing this. Even with the announcement that a "new," reinvigorated labor movement has been fielded, historically, union struggles have rarely challenged capital's prerogatives and there is nothing in this current mini-wave of

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## Detroit Seen

Welcome to our Fall 1997 edition, #350. We think we've assembled numerous informative and challenging articles for you and are particularly pleased with the issue's art work.

Thanks to Stephen Goodfellow for the cover's ominous drawing and no less to the creative talents of Richard Mock, Maurice Spira, Bill Koehnline, and Marilyn Rashid whose drawings grace our pages; also, to

Alexis Buss for her tasty layout of Alan Antif's art and anarchy article. Thanks to all of you whose contributions keep our project going. Prisoners and GIs: if this is your first issue, please notify us if you want to be on our subscription list.

Sorry for the abbreviated Detroit Seen this issue, but the strike coverage took all of the room available.

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Much of consumption is obscenely fueled by the wealthy loaning money, in the form of credit card debt, at usurious interest rates to the classes below them. Thus, the rich profit from both commodity sales and debt collection. Although the rich are getting richer at the expense of those farther down the pyramid, the progressive capitalists worry that the mountain of personal debt, stagnant wages, a growing disdain for the political system and other signs of disaffection from official institutions contain a potential for economic instability and political rage. They hope sharing the wealth just a little more will bring these glitches under control, hence their tepid support for unions in this period.

However, the largess of the rulers has limits as does the willingness of unions to fight for their members. Immediately following the recent Teamster victory in the UPS strike, the company announced it would go ahead with layoffs of as many as 15,000 workers to compensate for strike losses.

The union, caught up in new corruption

Continued on page 31



# Conversations with Allen Ginsberg

**Two interviews with the poet on life, death, sex, poetry, Kerouac, and meditation—one from 1991 published here for the first time; the other from a 1969 FE**

the day, to each, to all, delicate death."

**PW:** Is this reflected in your recent writing?

**AG:** Yeah, I think one of the best poems I wrote—song I sang [at my last Ann Arbor appearance], is called "Father Death Blues," on the death of my own father. It's a good solid, late work by myself as poet. I'm very pleased to produce something that ripened out of meditation and out of experience.

**PW:** You also sang another song there, "Put Down Your Cigarette Rag (Dont Smoke)."

**AG:** Oh, yeah, (sings) "Dont smoke dont smoke dont smoke. Dont smoke. It's a nine billion dollar, Capitalist communist joke, Dont smoke the official dope dope dope dope."

**PW:** I'd like to have you sing the oral alternatives you pose to smoking but we can't do it on the radio. [Note: The text reads, "Put something in your mouth. Like skin not cigarette filth. Suck tit suck tit suck cock suck cock, suck clit suck prick suck it... But dont smoke shit nope, nope nope nope Dope Dope Dope Dope, the official dope Dont Smoke."]

**AG:** It's saying make love with your mouth. Touching skin with your mouth whether kissing or anything else is more healthy than the official dirty nicotine. But also I pointed out that U.S. Senator Jesse Helms, who has set himself up as the moral arbiter of the country recently with a new law trying to restrict National Endowment for the Arts grants (attacking homosexuals actually) is himself an important lobbyist for this death-dealing legal drug, nicotine. And, spending taxpayer money to subsidize the agriculture of it. A really interesting contradiction.

**PW:** What does it mean to you to be a senior citizen other than to get into movies at reduced rates?

**AG:** And half-fare on the subways. But as a senior citizen I have the right to speak my mind; I've been obeying the rules long enough and I still obey the rules, but the true rules are the rules of candor and truth-

**Above:** Ginsberg drawing from program cover of May 24 memorial and concert featuring Patti Smith, Natalie Merchant, and Anne Waldman; p. 9 photo: Robert Frank

fulness and frankness; that's what Walt Whitman asked for from poets. So, in a poetry reading there would naturally be a candid, frank and truthful account of what goes through my body and my mind, what rouses me erotically.

**PW:** So, at 65 you still have sexual thoughts?

**AG:** Sure, sex, death and also life and also food and also health and also your liver and also Buddhism and also Jewishness and also the Middle East and also marijuana and also psychedelics and also meditation and also the Tibetan Lamas; hundreds of thousands of thoughts run through your mind in a couple days.

**PW:** Every time I've seen you read you have at least one explicitly sexual poem which shocks at least a small percentage of your audience.

**AG:** I try to write my mind; to give a picture of the actual operation of my mind. It's like meditation. You notice what goes through your mind. I give in a reading, a sufficient proportion to explicitly erotic matter that you would in the normal course of your daytime reveries whether you're a fundamentalist Christian or not. That's why they're always talking about temptation; something rises in their minds. I'm trying to make an accurate picture and take the windbag out of it all and take the fear out of it and take the anxiety out of it and make it ordinary, because it is ordinary.

**PW:** Has there been a recent upsurge in interest in poetry?

**AG:** I think it's been happening all along. As the government gets more full of lies and confusion and double-talk, nobody believes anyone anymore. And, as the public consciousness—media—gets more obscure and furtive and prejudiced and owned by the Republicans or multi-nationals, the only place you can get any news that stays news or candid, truthful, personal opinion is in poetry. That's the old tradition of poetry; that's what it was for. It's not the state's; it's not the official propaganda.

**PW:** Do you read "Howl" in public any more?

**AG:** Yes. When I go to a new state or new country or when there's some occa-



**Note:** In October 1991, Fifth Estate staff member Peter Werbe interviewed poet Allen Ginsberg on the radio talk show he hosts. Ginsberg was in Ann Arbor for the performance of his opera, "Hydrogen Jukebox," a collaboration with composer and pianist Philip Glass. As were so many of Ginsberg's Michigan appearances, the opening was a benefit for Jewel Heart, an international organization of Tibetan Buddhist and cultural centers.

Ginsberg's *Selected Poems, 1947-1995* (Harper Collins) and a CD from one of its selections, "The Ballad of the Skeletons," recorded with Paul McCartney, Philip Glass, and Lenny Kaye, was released shortly before the poet's death in April of this year.

**Peter Werbe:** At an earlier Ann Arbor appearance, you shared the stage with Gelek Rinpoche, spiritual director of Jewel Heart, and discussed the importance of the last breath before death. What's its importance?

**Allen Ginsberg:** I recently became a senior citizen; I just turned 65 and my mind is turning to what Shakespeare said at the end of *The Tempest* when Prospero

goes home having solved his problems: "To Genoa then where every third thought shall be my grave." When you get to a certain age, you like to prepare for what's to come; you make your will, you straighten out your affairs so you don't leave a mess for other people to worry about and you straighten out your mind so you don't leave a mess for yourself on the death bed, and don't panic.

**PW:** People in our culture usually see impending death as something quite fearful.

**AG:** It's nonsensical to fear death because everyone is going to die, so you might as well relate to it in a way that's not so scary.

**PW:** Were you ever afraid of death?

**AG:** Yeah, sure, when I was younger. But now that I realize it's really inevitable I want to come to some terms with it that aren't negative. I would like to come to some positive terms, which is an old American tradition in Walt Whitman. Remember, he said, "Come lovely death, undulate around the world serenely, arriving, arriving sooner or later in the night, in



sion that dignifies it so it's not just an act, like the first or second reading I gave for Gelek Rinpoche [spiritual director of Ann Arbor's Jewel Heart] as a benefit. I wanted him to hear that American sound of "Howl," that "barbaric yawp," so to speak, to use Whitman's phrase. I wanted him to hear the phrasing, "Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running money! Moloch whose fingers are ten armies! Moloch the vast stone of war! Moloch the stunned governments!" then the follow-up about "demonic industries! monstrous bombs!" I wanted him to hear that analysis which winds up "Moloch whose name is the Mind!" which is basically a Buddhist view of the hyper-industrialized catastrophe that's coming to the planet.

**PW:** Is "Howl" your best effort? It's certainly a dramatic portrayal of America with its myths stripped away.

**AG:** Well, it's a good one, but a superior poem is a longer one written four years later called "Kaddish." It has a lot more concrete detail and is at the same time a visionary, romantic, bold dream of America and also a narrative account of my mother. I think every couple of years I get into some kind of peak experience with poetry. Before "Howl" there's a poem called "The Green Auto," then "Howl" and "Sunflower Sutra" around 1955. Then "Kaddish" in 1960, "Wichita Vortex Sutra" in 1965, part of which is the climax of Act I of "Hydrogen Juke Box." Philip Glass liked it and it was the first thing he and I did together as a duet. He knew the poem when it was originally published in the mid-'60s in the *Village Voice* in which I say, "I here declare the end of the war! Let the State tremble, let the Nation weep, let Congress legislate its own delight, (laughs) let the President execute his own desire, for I hereby declare the end of the war."

So, that was a moment of self-recognition, self-empowerment, courage, consistent sparkiness. It was meek—obviously, I can't stop the war—but at the same time lively, at the same time surprising, at the same time it was almost inscrutable. How could anybody declare the end of the war? But just the same, how could the President declare it? The same dragon-like inscrutability or outrageousness, actually.

**PW:** You've always had the capacity to emanate peace. I'm reminded of the time in 1965 when you confronted the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang in Oakland, Calif. who had sworn to attack and disrupt a peace demonstration.

**AG:** Yes, at an early anti-Vietnam war march which prophesied the whole nation turning against the war by 1968.

**PW:** The Hells Angels were probably the most frightening looking human beings this side of a Salvadoran death squad, and probably just as mean.

**AG:** They had a funny kind of code of honor of their own and a Buddha nature of their own, but very deeply hidden, so it was a question of appealing to that. Almost anybody, even the Supreme Court, has a Buddha nature *somewhere* buried real deep, so it's a matter of calling on that awakened mind or sense of compassion or gentleness or vulnerability or suffering ultimately. The Supreme Court suffers, Bush suffers, everybody is suffering. You have to put your finger on the suffering, name it, point it out so everybody's in the same boat.

[FE Note: In the above mentioned incident, the Vietnam Day Committee, led by activists like Jerry Rubin with Ginsberg in the front ranks, planned to march from the University of California Berkeley campus to an Oakland army base where recruits were shipped to the war zone. The demonstrators were stopped at the city border by the police and attacked by the motorcycle gang. Later, Ginsberg, Ken Kesey and others chilled out the head of the Angels with LSD and chanting following a heated political discussion about the war.]

**PW:** When ferocious men come to stop you, to hurt you, what does it take?

**AG:** Maybe I was too stupid in those days to realize the trouble I was in. I've never been in a situation where it was *that* dangerous, I don't think. In Eastern Europe a couple of times and in Cuba when I was arrested by the communist police for criticizing their governments it was a little more dangerous than anywhere other than maybe Chicago in 1968 with the police there. And, occasionally there have been attempts to set me up by the American police on phony drug charges by threatening friends they'll send them to jail if they don't plant grass in my house. But that was long ago and it never amounted to anything, so I've never been paranoid. At the same time, maybe as coward, I've avoided any really confrontational situation. Certainly I'm a coward. I wouldn't want to be in a really dangerous place.

**PW:** It sure sounds like you've been in a number of them.

**PW:** An October 1969 *Fifth Estate* had an interview with you where you say the "trees are our allies" and that we have to speak in their defense. [FE note: see p. 10.]

**AG:** It was an idea of Gary Snyder's, talking about the Northwest trees and pointing out that the exploiters on the planet were the human race, in a kind of race or species chauvinism, and the workers were actually the trees and the forest and the plants. And somebody, some Senator, ought to speak up for all those hundreds of thousands of miles of trees who have no representation, who have no representation in Congress although they're all sentient beings.

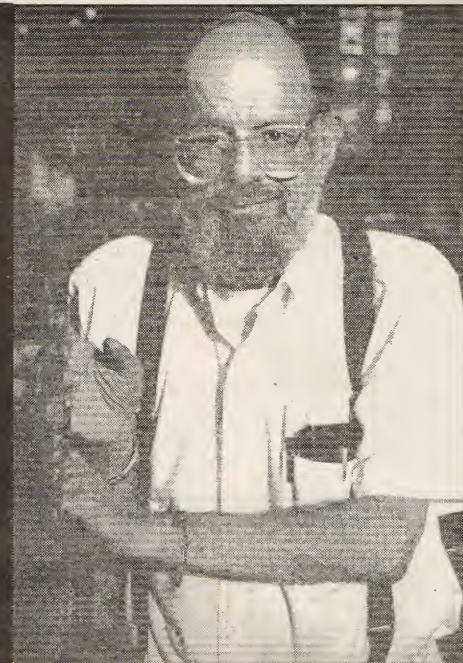
**PW:** The Senators are representing the logging companies.

**AG:** People have been living with the forest and relating to it, and you could say communicating with it, and being communicated to in the form of shade, food, company, meditative comfort, inspiration as long as the human race has been around.

**PW:** Tomorrow is the twenty-second anniversary of Kerouac's death.

**AG:** Yes, old October. His favorite month of reddening leaves and falling leaves and change of the seasons and au-

**"The only place you can get any news that stays news or candid, truthful, personal opinion is in poetry. That's the old tradition of poetry; that's what it was for. It's not the state's; it's not the official propaganda."**



turn of fruitfulness. He was very fond of that, maybe out of Thomas Wolff's long prose elegy of October. I remember Kerouac had a lot of octobral word music. I think he liked the word October; it was sort of Beethovenian.

**PW:** It was said toward the end of his life he became a misanthrope, almost a racist and right-winger. Was this the Jack Kerouac you knew?

**AG:** No, I don't think he was. When you look back at his comments at that time, he was quite prophetic. He was putting down that aspect of the left that was angry and waving pictures of Mao Tse-Tung and Castro and calling for bringing the war home and waving the Viet Cong flag which offended the majority of the American people who already were sick of the war. For Kerouac, it was taking a kind of middle position; he didn't like the right wing conservatives and he didn't like the left wing. He liked William Buckley because he had kind of an interesting language. But when he got on Buckley's [TV] program a year before he died, he put down the Vietnam war in a way that embarrassed Buckley.

Buckley asked what he thought and Kerouac said, "The war is just a way for the South Vietnamese to get our jeeps," which is a real redneck, anti-war remark. And, Buckley said, "Oh, you can't really mean that," and Kerouac looked at him with this very strange leer and said, "Well, they got a lot of them, didn't they?" Buckley was just reduced to silence.

Teaching Kerouac's work now and re-reading *Tristessa* and *Dharma Bums* and *Big Sur*, I'm amazed by his insight into basic Buddhist thoughts of the nature of the universe, the sort of transitory nature and the lack of permanence in the universe, the dream-like nature of the universe, like the moon in a dew drop or a

dream itself. He had very good insight. Listening during the last few weeks to the Dali Lama and other teachers, I'm amazed at Kerouac's early American ken.

**PW:** You wrote a lot in your early years when you were quite anguished.

**AG:** Yes, anguished, but I wasn't quite angry. Even in anguish there was always a sort of double humor. The most anguished poem is certainly on my mother ["Kaddish"] and her madness and mental hospitals and yet there's kind of a hyperbolic exaggeration that's a little bit like Charlie Chaplin's bittersweet in *City Lights*.

**PW:** What capacity does poetry have that it can strike so deeply into the human psyche often more so than prose?

**AG:** Well, we think all the time in words or most of the time or often we think in words. We conduct the government in words. We conduct our legal affairs, our family affairs—it's all words and language. So, here's the quintessence of language, the deepest language, the permanent and memorable language which goes to the pith experiences that we have and formulates the exact insights and attitudes that you learn from the age of ten to 65 or 95. For instance, Kerouac has a very interesting line in a poem, "Anger doesn't like to be reminded of fits," which puts into one line a whole paragraph I used to describe anger.

In Ann Arbor, we were using the phrase of another Lama, "First thought; best thought." And it was natural thought, the first raw thought you have is the best form if you can remember it. So, the question is remembering your own mind. Poetry remembers your mind.

**PW:** You're going to be in Ann Arbor for two performances of "Hydrogen Juke-



# "The trees are our allies": Ginsberg's 1969 interview with the Fifth Estate

**Note:** Allen Ginsberg spoke to FE staff member David Gaynes in October 1969 on the way to a reading at Macomb Community College on the far east side of metropolitan Detroit. Ginsberg was here doing a series of readings for the John Sinclair Defense Fund and a benefit for the Ann Arbor underground paper *The Argus*. This is a slightly revised and reduced version of the interview that appeared in the October 30-November 12 1969 FE.

**Fifth Estate:** What place does poetry have in the United States at the present time in connection with the movement?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Well, what's going on in America is much larger than what's going on in the movement. What's going on is a lot of trees growing and plants moving around and cows eating grass, which is more important than anything, so poetry is just part of the same natural order—it's just like speech . . . it's just more

coherent speech.

So, if coherent speech has any place in the larger natural movement that's going on, including the sun and the stars and people growing up, then it has got the same old place it always had, and as for the movement, it can stick its preoccupations with what place anything has up its own ass.

**FE:** Do you think that poetry is playing an important role in creating social awareness?

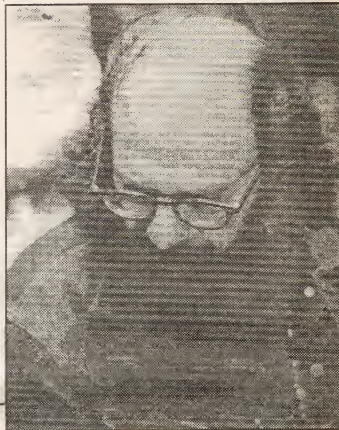
**AG:** No, I don't think it is . . .

**FE:** Do you think that rock music is the new poetry as far as young people are concerned?

**AG:** Well, yes, with the Beatles' "I Am A Walrus," and some of Dylan's lyrics. It returns to the old poetry

Continued on page 27

**Allen Ginsberg at a 1969 reading sponsored by the Fifth Estate. FE file photo/Dick Elbinger**



## Conversations with Ginsberg

Continued from page 9

box." How was it assembled?

**AG:** We all sat down and decided what are the themes we want to cover? Rock and roll, meditation, death, poetry, music, politics, drugs, travel, the Far East, Buddhism, electricity, ecology, the planet, the death of the planet, the end of the millennium, the fall of America, American empire, war, all of those themes. Then we rummaged through my work and found poems fitted exactly to those themes. Then we made a whole scheme which ends with me declaring the end of the war at the end of Act I with a tape of Philip playing and me orating. Then it begins in the second part with a vision of a hyper-civilization—Moloch—and goes off to the end with "Father Death."

**PW:** You mention meditation as important activity, but people often think of it as esoteric or exotic, practiced only by people like Allen Ginsberg.

**AG:** Half the world does it, actually. The whole eastern portion—India, China, Japan; at least it's traditional in their cultures and it's also traditional in native cultures and basic cultures. American Indians have to sit very patiently during long dances or while hunting. It's a by-product of the activity of the world in a sense. In the case of Americans, it's good medicine for all the animosity and anxiety and freakout and worry and hyper-activity and hyper-intellectuality and hyper-civilization we're constantly subjected to, with a barrage of planetary bad news.

**PW:** Most people conceive of meditation as sitting and doing nothing which is so inimical to the American psyche.

**AG:** It would be great if you could sit there and do nothing. The tendency of most minds is to move around and to think and to plan and to gossip and to babble and to constantly be fixating on something and grabbing onto something for entertainment. If you could actually take a vacation from all that activity, it'd be a miracle. That's the purpose of meditation, to see if you can vacate your mind.

In most meditations you pay attention to your breath. You add that awareness to the already ongoing process of breathing. It's hard to focus your mind and concentrate on one thing or rest your mind or abide relaxation in one spot. You notice there's an automatic nervousness and thinking and planning and memory; you talk to yourself, "What do I have to do next," instead of enjoying the moment. So, you take a friendly attitude to your thoughts, not push them away, not try and stop thinking because that's inevitable, but not to invite your thoughts into tea either. Let them worry about themselves and just observe them, observe your mind moving.

**PW:** Are there things you know now you wish you had known earlier in life?

**AG:** Yes. If you act out fits of anger, they don't do you much good and you always have to pay for it. Although anger is natural, if you notice you're angry, most of the anger disappears, at least 80 percent of it according to the Tibetan teacher in Ann Arbor, Gelek Rimpoche. He says if you get angry, just notice it; you don't have to stop it, just notice it and it tends to dissolve like a soap bubble. I wish I'd noticed that a long time ago.

## Love Note For Allen Ginsberg

Dear Allen,

Are you really dead? I don't believe it. My hands are black with ink & my eyes are wet with the sting of *The New York Times* front page. You are embalmed in the headlines as "Countercultural Guru" & "Master of the Outrageous," by journalists who try to synthesize & summarize the volumes of your subversive words. I'm at work in a drab warehouse in Nashville where most of the folk don't even know I'm a faery, where even gentle graffiti evokes the talisman of fear. The closet you helped me explode has its door shut & locked tightly here.

I know the world is already a colder, creepier place without you this morning. Memory shuttles me to a men's room in Boulder, Colorado where you flirted with me one July afternoon in 1991. You gave me spontaneous phrases & praises about the "xerox pamphleteer's dada" I had shared with you. I wish we had not been so shy in our suggestions that soft summer day. I wish we had kissed on the lips, let our imaginations realize the fullness of desire.

I am loving you from the lush lawns of that mountain town to the Ann Arbor auditorium where I heard you "howl" to a packed house, poetry reading as big as revival or rock concert or revolutionary rally. I am loving you that night we talked on the radio about my favorite poem, "Please, Master," hot hymn of sex & submission. You gave yourself to how many men? How many same-sex saviors sucked you? America still needs the clarity of your clear queer conscience. America is still not worthy of its millions of faggots jews anarchists pacifists buddhists & poets. We are losing ground. We should be dancing on the ground. Lighting candles in your honor. Reciting your poems.

You will always be with us. You, who always seemed more comfortable with your mortality than most, did not deserve to die. I hope you have come home to the nirvana of no-mind or to the heaven of healthy hedonism where hot hunks will suck your cock, fill your hole & rub your feet for the entirety of eternity.

You will always be with us as we perpetually invoke your dense packages of description, convocations of kitchen sink mysticism, everyday ecstasy & eroticism. Now, more than ever, we need your bold innocence as it shocks civilized shame with shameless inseminations of convivial cadences.

You are my ancestor & poetic elder. I am a child of your tribal impulses & immoral morality. Let us all be brave enough to be the humble stewards of the torch you carried for so long, whether in flower power pot smoke anti war splendor or in your latter day literary fame & wisdom. Even in your dignified suit & tie you were always naked beneath your clothes, a gay beatnik hippy radical scribe spitting the sweet jism of poetic justice on the false idols of American injustice.

Love,  
Sunfog



# Freedom Individualism Revolution:

## COURBET, ZOLA, PROUDHON and Artistic Anarchism

by Allan Antliff



Monument to the Fallen Communards, Pere-Lachaise Cemetery, Paris

Artistic anarchism has a long and complex history. Certainly one of its most interesting chapters in France is the development of two competing anarchist discourses about art's libertarian possibilities during the years leading up to the ill-fated Paris Commune of 1871. Then the paintings of the anarchist artist Gustave Courbet served as a foil for a debate in which Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's praise for Courbet's "Realist" aesthetic was pitted against the young novelist Émile Zola's enthusiasm for the stylistic qualities of Courbet's art. Proudhon encapsulated his views in his last book, *Du principe de l'art et de sa destination sociale* (The principle of art and its social goal), published in 1865.<sup>1</sup> Here he situated art production socially so as to affirm the artist's freedom to transform history. Proudhon argued art was inescapably social, and that the artist was free only to the degree to which he or she sought to transform society. He admired Courbet's Realism because it pushed history forward through critique, extending the dialectical interplay between anarchist criticism and social transformation into the artistic realm.

Zola, on the other hand, argued art was a vehicle of freedom solely to the degree that it was in accord with the artist's own tastes and aesthetic sensibility.<sup>2</sup> With this end in mind he decoupled the issue of artistic freedom from the artist's role in history, encouraging the artist to depict society from a position of disinterestedness rather than engagement. As we shall see, his dismissal of Proudhon's emphasis on art's critical content led him to praise Courbet for the stylistic innovations in his art, which Zola held up as a new anarchist index of artistic freedom.

So the debate stood in the late 1860s. Courbet went on to participate in the Paris Commune, where he formed an artists' federation bent on implementing a radical art program for the new revolutionary era. Then, as theory gave way to the test of practice, he and his comrades proclaimed total freedom in the arts. In effect, the Commune had broken the chains binding anarchist art theory to the problem of how to achieve artistic freedom in an oppressive social order. Thus, for a fleeting moment, the Proudhon-Zola debate was resolved by new, uncharted possibilities for artistic creation, possibilities the Commune would guarantee, support, and extend indefinitely.

The story begins in the early 1840s, when Paris became a haven for a number of political refugees known as the "radical Hegelians." These refugees were part of a small group of activists who had transformed a philosophy of historical development first formulated by the conservative German philosopher Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831) into a radical theory of social change which challenged the sanctity of the church, the system of monarchical rule, and capitalist property relations. Principal among the group were the

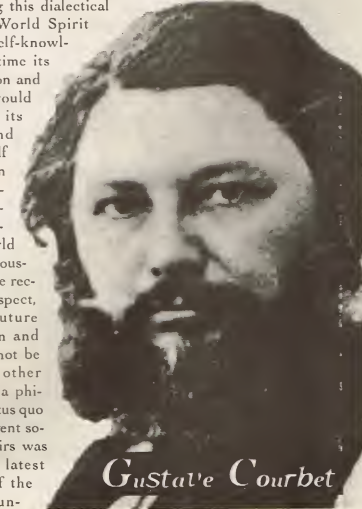
Russian Mikhail Bakunin, who arrived in France to avoid forcible extradition to Russia, and the Germans Karl Marx and Karl Grün, who had been forced out of Germany for their journalistic activities.

In Paris they all sought out and befriended Proudhon, who had recently gained fame for his stinging critique of capitalism and the state entitled, *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government* (1840). In this book Proudhon declared "property is theft" and denounced "the government of man by man" in favor of a society based on "equality, law, independence, and proportionality"—principles which he argued found their highest perfection in the social union of "order and anarchy."<sup>3</sup> In one simple and compelling statement the anarchist movement was born: and the message rang as a clarion call throughout leftist Europe.

Proudhon and his new friends met in the humble apartments, ale houses, and coffee-houses of working-class Paris, where they engaged in excited discussions that turned on two issues: the critique of idealism mounted by the radical Hegelian philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach and the related concept of dialectics, which was central to the Hegelian theory of historical change.<sup>4</sup> Briefly, Hegel posited that world history was driven

by an unfolding process of alienation in which a divine "World Spirit" manifested itself in partial and incomplete forms of self-knowledge which were objectified in human consciousness as Reason and Freedom. This Spirit was gradually emerging to complete self-consciousness and self-definition through a dialectical process in which incomplete forms of self-consciousness manifest in human history were formulated, negated and then reconciled in successively higher and more inclusive syntheses—syntheses that in turn were destined to themselves be negated and subsumed. History progressed along this dialectical path until the World Spirit achieved total self-know-

ledge, at which time its own objectification and self-alienation would cease and its objecthood and knowledge of itself would coincide in unity.<sup>5</sup> Hegel argued that the dialectical manifestation of the World Spirit's self-consciousness could only be recognized in retrospect, and that the future forms of Reason and Freedom could not be predicted. In other words, this was a philosophy of the status quo in which the current social state of affairs was justified as the latest manifestation of the World Spirit's un-



Gustave Courbet



folding self-consciousness.

The radical Hegelians questioned this notion by utilizing the principles of Reason and Freedom to critically distinguish "the actual and rational features of the universe from the illusionary, irrational ones."<sup>6</sup> In Germany, for example, they rejected the prevailing monarchist political order and argued for the adoption of the bourgeois-democratic and republican principles of the French Revolution. They also introduced human agency into the dialectical process, equating their social critiques with the dialectic of negation in Hegel's progressive triad.<sup>7</sup>

Ludwig Feuerbach's attack on Hegel completed the radicals' revision of the philosopher's grand scheme. Feuerbach argued that the divine World Spirit was a fiction, and that the real dialectic driving history hitherto had been a process of human estrangement from our essence in which ideals born of human experience were continuously objectified in the form of metaphysical concepts attributed to otherworldly deities, such as goodness, justice, and love.<sup>8</sup> Humanity's self-negation through objectification could only be overcome by recognizing that no ideals existed apart from humanity. "The species," wrote Feuerbach, "is the last measure of truth . . . what is true is what is in agreement with the essence of the species, what is false is what disagrees with it."<sup>9</sup>

Freedom, therefore, resided in our ability to realize our humanized ideals in the world. Feuerbach characterized his philosophy as "anthropological" to signal that, finally, the metaphysical ideals which had dominated human thought since time immemorial had been brought



*Return from the Conference, 1863*

my understanding."<sup>14</sup>

Feuerbach's dialectical and anthropological idealism, which underpinned Proudhon's anti-metaphysical concept of the critical synthesis, led the French anarchist to justify revolutions as the supreme attempt to realize moral goals through social change. In *The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* (1851), Proudhon called revolution "an act of sovereign justice, in the order of moral facts, springing out of the necessity of things, and in consequence carrying with it its own justification."<sup>15</sup> "Springing out of the necessity of things," moral imperatives changed as society changed: in Proudhon's critical method, "justice" took on a radically contingent, historical and social character.

Proudhon's idea of a critical "synthesis" was derived from the theory of dialectics espoused by the German philosopher Emanuel Kant.<sup>16</sup> In his famous essay, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), Kant claimed he had exposed the inability of human reason to know the world as it is, meaning the world conceived apart from the perspective of the knower.<sup>17</sup> Reason, he argued, could not transcend the boundaries of the sensible and the dialectical nature of human reason was proof of this fact. Kant held that from any premise we could derive both a proposition and its negation. This dialectical opposition exposed the false truth of the premise which gave birth to it, leading him to conclude that we could never attain the transcendental knowledge necessary for knowing the world in its totality.<sup>18</sup>

In Proudhon's anti-metaphysical reformulation of the Kantian dialectic, the social critic, guided by the imperatives of reason and morality, deduced moral syntheses from dialectical contradictions found in society. The means by which a synthesis was transformed from a moral-based deduction of social contradictions to a resolution of those contradictions was through social transformation. Whereas for Marx history was driven by a Hegelian dialectic in which conflicting social forces moved through ever-higher syntheses toward their final resolution, Proudhon argued social contradictions, and the moral solutions the social critic deduced from these contradictions, were historically contingent and ever-changing.<sup>19</sup> In Proudhon's system the free exercise of human reason in every social sphere came to the fore as the progressive force in history, a position which led him to argue freedom from all coercion was the

necessary prerequisite for realizing a just society. In James Rubin's words, "Proudhon held that anarchy (that is anarchy, the absence of authority) was the only possible condition for social progress."<sup>20</sup>

Proudhon's anarchist philosophy of art was deeply inscribed with the Feuerbachian critique of metaphysical idealism which I have outlined above. He codified this philosophy in *Du principe de l'art* which was published in the year of his death in 1865. In the opening chapter Proudhon informed his readers that the book was inspired by the French government's refusal to exhibit Courbet's painting, entitled *Return from the Conference*, at the official state art exhibition of 1863.<sup>21</sup>

Gustave Courbet was an old friend of Proudhon and a long-standing participant in the anarchist political culture of Paris (he honoured Proudhon in 1865 with a portrait, *Proudhon and His Family*). Courbet's artistic notoriety stemmed from the years 1848-51, when the French monarchy was overthrown and a Republican government was briefly instituted. In 1851 Courbet created a scandal at the state's annual art exhibition, where he exhibited two immense paintings depicting banal scenes from the life of the French peasantry, painted in a style akin to popular woodblock prints. The upper-class public were accustomed to works such as Jean-Léon Gérôme's *Greek Interior* of 1850 which offered slickly-painted "classical" titillations far removed from the social realities of the day. Courbet's *Stonebreakers* and *Burial at Ornans* (both painted in 1849-50 and exhibited in 1851), therefore, came as a shock. Courbet's paintings shattered the artistic boundaries between rich and poor, cultured and uncultured, and as a result they were roundly condemned for their rude subject-matter, rough, "unfinished" brush-work, shallow perspectives, and overall lack of painterly decorum.

But artistic "crudity" was not the sole reason for the heated objections to Courbet's work. During the short-lived Republic of 1848-51 the workers of Paris and Lyon engaged in violent agitation for the state to adopt Proudhon's call for "national workshops" that would guarantee them employment, and the impoverished French peasantry were in a perpetual state of unrest against landlords in the countryside. Beseated by growing working-class radicalism, the Parisian upper classes saw Courbet's paintings as an affront to establishment values in art and a political provocation against their power. Eventually they solved the problem of social unrest by throwing their lot in with the dictatorship of Louis-Napoléon III, nephew of Napoléon Bonaparte, who proclaimed himself emperor after a coup-d'état in 1851.<sup>22</sup>

However throughout Napoléon III's reign, from 1851 to 1870, Courbet continued to paint in the same uncompromising manner. He called his new style "Real-



*Stonebreakers, 1849-50*

ism," and paid tribute to himself and his accomplishment in a huge retrospective painting of 1855 entitled *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory*. Courbet depicted himself painting a landscape, observed by an admiring nude model. The model is "real" but also an allegorical figure

down to earth and subsumed into humanity's sensuous, historical essence.<sup>10</sup>

Proudhon was introduced to Feuerbach's critique of Hegel by Grün in the fall of 1844.<sup>11</sup> In his book on *The Socialist Movement in France and Belgium* (1845), Grün described his meetings with Proudhon and the French anarchist's eagerness to discuss German philosophy. Proudhon had already gained a cursory grasp of Hegel through French commentaries on the German philosopher. "He was greatly relieved," wrote Grün, "when I told him how Feuerbach's criticism dissolved the Hegelian bombast."<sup>12</sup> Grün outlined Feuerbach's revision of Hegel for Proudhon and ended the conversation declaring his "anthropology" was "metaphysics in action" to which Proudhon excitedly replied, "I am going to show that political economy is metaphysics in action."<sup>13</sup>

In fact, Feuerbach provided Proudhon with the philosophical foundation for sweeping the metaphysical moralities of religion and philosophy aside in favour of moral principles logically "synthesized" from experience. Proudhon described his method of arriving at moral judgments as human-centered and anti-metaphysical, writing: "With man consciousness/conscience is the dominant faculty, the sovereign power. . . it is not from any metaphysics, poetry or theodicy that I deduce the rules of my life or my sociability. On the contrary, it is from the dictates of my consciousness/conscience that I deduce the laws of



of the painter's muse (nature). Behind the artists are the patrons, comrades, writers, and philosophers who inspired him—notably Charles Baudelaire and Proudhon, who surveys the scene from the back of the room. Facing the painter are the products of the corrupt and degenerate society he critiqued, including destitute workers, a businessman, and Louis-Napoléon himself with his hunting dog and gun.

Courbet's *Return from the Conference*, which depicted drunken clerics on their way home from a religious gathering, was another Realist *four-de-force*; in this instance, directed against the degenerate institution of the church. Refused a showing in the 1863 state exhibition and maligned by establishment art critics, the painting provoked a tremendous storm of indignation, leading Courbet, who regarded the work as the artistic equivalent to Proudhon's own critical "synthesis" of society's wrongs, to ask the anarchist philosopher to defend it.<sup>23</sup>

In *Du principe de l'art* Proudhon recounted Courbet's rebuke of the establishment critics who vilified *Return from the Conference*. The artist condemned them "for misrepresenting . . . the high mission of art, for moral depravity, and for prostituting [art] with their idealism." "Who is wrong," Proudhon asked; "the so-called Realist Courbet, or his detractors, the champions of the ideal?"<sup>24</sup> Proudhon set out to resolve this opposition.

First he turned his attention to the issue of idealism. As we have seen, Proudhon, following Feuerbach, viewed metaphysical knowledge as an impossibility, and this informed his critique of artistic idealism, in which he attacked the idea that metaphysical ideas could spring, fully-formed, from the imagination of the artist. Art, Proudhon argued, was made up of specific forms, subjects, and images. The idealized subject in art, therefore, was inseparable from the real objects it re-presented. Thus there was no metaphysical "separation of the real and the ideal" as Courbet's "idealist" critics maintained.<sup>25</sup>

Proudhon then took up the question of realism. By the early 1860s other artists were also painting in a "realist" style, however they tended to temper the aesthetic crudeness associated with Courbet and chose subject-matter from everyday life that, though "real," would not offend. Proudhon criticized the artists of this lesser "realist" camp, accusing them of maintaining that art should slavishly imitate reality.<sup>26</sup> This, he argued, was a falsification of what art was. A photograph, for example, could capture an image, but it could not replicate the power of the artist to magnify the qualities of character residing in a subject or imbue an inanimate object with meaning. A "realist" aesthetic that imitated the photograph, therefore, entailed "the death of art."<sup>27</sup>

As we have seen, in his earlier writings Proudhon condemned social criticism based on metaphysical idealism and valorized an anti-metaphysical, moral synthesis as the basis for social advancement. In *Du principe de l'art* he argued that art contained the potential to become a vehicle for such a critique. Art was a product of idealism, but idealism in a Proudhonian sense, because the creative imagination of the artist, like art's subject-matter, was inseparable from the real world. Courbet not only recognized this fact; his brand of Realism turned art to critical ends in the interest of social advancement, bringing art in line with Proudhon's prognosis for the reform of society through a critique deduced from the actual conditions of contemporary society. As such Courbet's painting stood in stark contrast to both "photographic realism" and the "metaphysical" art of Gérôme and his ilk, whose irrational and self-indulgent pursuit of otherworldly "chimeras" such as "beauty" elevated artistic contemplation to an ideal in-and-of-itself, rendering the critical power of human abstraction and reason "useless."<sup>28</sup> "Our idealism," wrote Proudhon, "consists of improving humanity . . . not according to types deduced a priori . . . but according to the givens supplied continuously from experience." And this critical idealism, he proclaimed, was the heart Courbet's



*Proudhon and His Family, 1865*

Realist aesthetic.<sup>29</sup>

Recognition of art's relationship to society, therefore, was the prerequisite for the free exercise of the artist's critical reason. In Feuerbachian terms the artist gained freedom from the condition of self-alienation engendered by a metaphysical world-view by taking up the cause of improving society through art. It followed that art would progress "as reason and humanity progress."<sup>30</sup> Such art, concluded Proudhon; "Will at last show us man, the citizen, and scientist, the producer, in his true dignity, which has too long been ignored; from now on art will work for the physical and moral improvement of the species, and it will do this, not by means of obscure hieroglyphics, erotic figures, or useless images of spirituality, but by means of vivid, intelligent representations of ourselves."<sup>31</sup>

This was Proudhon's view. That same year Émile Zola, who championed radical politics and artistic independence with equal tenacity, encapsulated his position in a polemical review of Proudhon's book entitled *Proudhon and Courbet*. He too supported "the free manifestation of individual thoughts—what Proudhon calls anarchy."<sup>32</sup> However his anarchism led him to a position markedly different from Proudhon's.

Zola couched his criticism of Proudhon in terms of a polarity that pit his own affirmation of individualism against the alleged repudiation of individual freedom in Proudhon's theory of art.<sup>33</sup> Proudhon, Zola argued, was trapped by his method, which preceded from a desire for the reign of equality and liberty in society to a logical deduction of the type of art that would bring about such a society.<sup>34</sup> The rigors of this "logic" determined that

Proudhon could only imagine one kind of artist: an artist who contributed to the anarchist struggle through the exercise of critical reason in the service of the social good.<sup>35</sup> This single-mindedness, Zola wrote, had led Proudhon to his impoverished definition of art. The author of *Du principe de l'art* defined art as "an idealization of nature and ourselves, whose goal is the physical and moral perfection of our species." But this definition was an oppressive tautology.<sup>36</sup> It could broach no unruly deviation on the part of the artist from art's stated goal. "In a word," Zola wrote, "individual feeling, the free expression of a personality, are forbidden."<sup>37</sup>

Here Zola's support for "the free expression of the personality" came head-to-head with the Feuerbachian underpinnings of Proudhon's notion of artistic anarchism. As I have demonstrated, in *Du principe de l'art* Proudhon moved, step by step, from a repudiation of

photographic realism and metaphysical idealism in art to a reformulation which tied art inextricably to the improvement of society. Individual freedom only entered the realm of art to the degree that the artist mounted a moral critique. Zola quite rightly pointed out that Proudhon's concept of artistic liberty was tied to a historical mission, and thus found its sole libertarian legitimation in relation to society.

For Zola, on the other hand, the locus of freedom was the individual, not society. In his words, "My art is a negation of society, an affirmation of the individual,

**Beset by growing  
working-class  
radicalism, the Parisian  
upper classes saw  
Courbet's paintings as  
an affront to  
establishment values  
in art and a political  
provocation against  
their power.**

independent of all rules and all social obligations."<sup>38</sup> As we have seen, Proudhon argued moral imperatives derived from the study of society should shape art. Zola, however, drew an absolute division between the artist and the world the artist represents by marshalling a radical subjectivism in which the imagination of the artist stood in for the old metaphysical realm of the Ideal. "I will have Proudhon note," Zola wrote, "That our ideas are absolute . . . we achieve perfection in a single bound; in our imagination, we arrive at the ideal state. Consequently it can be understood that we have little care for the world. We are fully in heaven and we are not coming down."<sup>39</sup>

Real freedom for artists lay in self-expression unfettered by social strictures and moral dictates. Consequently Zola placed a premium on formalist originality and dismissed the significance of subject-matter in painting. Content in a work of art was always derived from something else—either the external world or traditional subject-matter. The true measure of artistic freedom, therefore, was style, since the artist's manipulation of formal elements such as colour, texture, light, etc. was the only aspect of a painting that was unique, original, in a word, individual.

Zola's discussion of Courbet's art centered on this argument. "My Courbet is an individual," he wrote, and he praised the artist's youthful decision to cease to imitate





"Flemish and Renaissance masters" as the mark of his "rebellious nature."<sup>40</sup> Even Courbet's Realism was transformed into an extension of the artist's individualism. Zola claimed that Courbet had become a Realist because he "felt drawn through his physical being . . . toward the material world surrounding him."<sup>41</sup> But the artist's real greatness lay in the singularity of his style. Zola recounted his own "confrontation" with the anarchist artist's paintings during a visit to Courbet's studio: "I was confronted with a tightly constructed manner of painting, broad, extremely polished and honest. The figures were true without being vulgar; the fleshy parts, firm and supple, were powerfully alive; the backgrounds were airy and endowed the figures with astounding vigour. The slightly muted coloration has an almost sweet harmony, while the exactness of tones, the breath of technique, establish the planes and help set off each detail in a surprising way. I see again these energy-filled canvases, unified, solidly constructed, true to life and as beautiful as truth."<sup>42</sup>

Having established the libertarian primacy of style, Zola ridiculed Proudhon for emphasizing the exact opposite, namely Courbet's subject matter. Proudhon, he wrote, saw Courbet "from the point of view of pure thought, outside of all painterly qualities. For him a canvas is a subject; paint it red or green, he could not care less. . . . He [always] obliges the painting to mean something; about the form, not a word."<sup>43</sup> The anarchist



*Fall of the Vendôme Column, May 16, 1871*

philosopher's problem, Zola concluded, was that he did not understand that "Courbet exists through himself, and not through the subjects he has chosen." "As for me," he wrote, "it is not the tree, the face, the scene I am shown that moves me; it is the man revealed through the work, it is the forceful, unique individual who has discovered how to create, alongside God's world, a personal world."<sup>44</sup>

In the most telling passage from this essay Zola defined a work of art as "a fragment of creation seen through a temperament."<sup>45</sup> For Zola the "fragment" was secondary to "temperament," and the index of temperament was style. Equating the exercise of temperament with the anarchist goal of individual freedom, therefore, Zola turned stylistic originality into a political act. Here the anarchist politics of art imploded into the art object as the artist strove to assert personal freedom through stylistic innovation, rather than social critique. The contrast with Proudhon's artist, who could not approach a condition of freedom except through social critique, was unequivocal.

In the mid-1860s, therefore, anarchism's relation to art had become hotly contested and divisive terrain. But in retrospect the differences dividing Proudhon and Zola were not unbridgeable. Both critics agreed that a libertarian aesthetic could not be achieved apart from human subjectivity, albeit two conflicting subjectivities—one social and historical, the other individual and ahistorical. Underlying their differences was a shared consensus that individual freedom lay at the heart of any artistic anarchism worthy of the name.

As it turned out, this consensus proved to be the

starting point for the implementation of a revolutionary art program in the spring of 1871. In July, 1870 Louis-Napoléon III declared war on the German state of Prussia over the issue of that state's growing power and influence in European affairs. An ignominious rout of the French army followed in September, 1870 and Louis-Napoléon was captured by the Germans. In response conservative French politicians deposed the monarchy, proclaiming a National Government of Defence and a new "Third Republic." But the conservatives were insincere in their efforts to resist the German invasion of France. Instead of prosecuting the war they entered into negotiations with the Prussians while a restive Parisian populace, unaware of the government's intentions, prepared itself for the defence of the capital. A German-French armistice was signed in January, 1871. With the Prussians encamped just outside the gates of the French capital the French army then moved on Paris to seize the cannon held by the city's militias. However the city resisted. Driving the troops of the so-called Government of Defence out of the city, they founded the Paris Commune on the 28th of March, 1871.<sup>46</sup>

The Commune established a form of government akin to Proudhon's model of federalist anarchism in which a municipal government subject to direct recall shopped its programs around the desires of various political clubs and working-class organizations. Courbet was witness to this social revolution during the Commune's short existence ( March

28—May 28, 1871). On April 30th, at the Commune's height, he wrote, "Paris is a true paradise! No police, no nonsense, no exaction of any kind, no arguments! Everything in Paris rolls along like clock-work. If only it could stay like this forever. In short, it is a beautiful dream. All government bodies are organized federally and run themselves."<sup>47</sup>

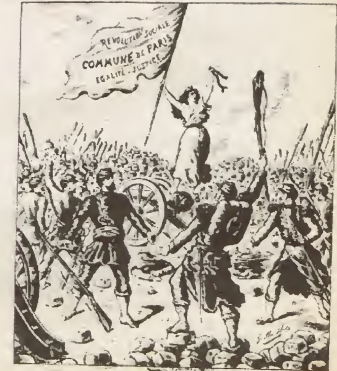
Courbet organized a Federation of Artists which abolished official state exhibitions, declared complete freedom of expression in the arts, and proposed the establishment of Commune-sponsored artist's schools throughout Paris. "Complete freedom of expression" for Courbet there was no longer a conflict between Zola's advocacy of freedom through style and Proudhon's advocacy of freedom through critique—an anarchist future could accommodate both. However this future was not to be. On the 21st of May the French army, which had been laying siege to the free city, broke through its defences and began subduing the Communards by force. Fighting was fierce as the city's inhabitants retreated behind barricades and fought the invaders house by house. The final stand against the army took place in the cemetery of Pere-Lachaise. After the Commune's defeat the army set up firing squads at this cemetery, which was later to become a rallying point for anarchists and socialists in the 1880s and 90s. In all the army killed 20,000 Parisians during the fighting and 30,000 more were jailed, executed, or deported. Among them was Courbet who had organized one of the Commune's most spectacular events—the pulling down, on the 16th of May, of the hated Vendôme column, symbol of Napoléonic tyranny under the First and Second Empires. Driven into Swiss exile for his part in the column's destruction, he continued to paint until his death in 1877.<sup>48</sup>

#### Notes

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3. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government*, (New York: Dover Press, 1970), 286.
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5. Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents in Marxism: The Founders*, trans. by P.S. Falla, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 72-73.
6. *Ibid.*, 82.
7. *Ibid.*, 83-85.
8. David McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 89.
9. Feuerbach quoted in *ibid.*, 92.
10. Ludwig Feuerbach, "Provisional Theses for the Reformation of Philosophy," *The Young Hegelians: An Anthology*, ed. by Lawrence S. Stepelevich, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 164.
11. George Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: A Biography*, (Montreal: Black Rose Press, 1987), 87-88.
12. Grün quoted in Henri de Lubac, *The Un-Marxian Socialist: A Study of Proudhon*, trans. by R.E. Scanlebury, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1948), 134, note 33.
13. Grün quoted in Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 88.
14. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *De la justice dans la revolution et dans l'eglise*, (Paris, 1858), 492-93.
15. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Twentieth-Century*, trans. by John Beverley Robinson, (London: Pluto Press, 1989), 40.
16. Steven Vincent, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 62, 72.
17. Roger Scruton, *Kant*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 46.
18. *Ibid.*, 48-49.

19. Bakunin also rejected the higher subsuming synthesis in the Hegelian triad. See Robert M. Cutler, "Introduction," *The Basic Bakunin: Selected Writings*, trans. and ed. by Robert M. Cutler, (New York: Prometheus Books, 1992).
20. James Henry Rubin, *Realism and Social Vision in Courbet and Proudhon*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 34.
21. Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art*, 1.
22. Roger Magraw, *The Age of the Arian Revolution, 1815-1871*, (London: Blackwell, 1992), 140-169; 180-181.
23. Rubin, *Realism and Social Vision*, 164.
24. Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art*, 3.
25. *Ibid.*, 31.
26. *Ibid.*, 38.
27. *Ibid.*, 39; 40-42.
28. *Ibid.*, 199.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, 84.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Zola, "Proudhon and Courbet," *My Hatreds*, 14.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*, 9.
35. *Ibid.*, 11.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*, 20.
39. *Ibid.*, 21.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*, 18.
43. *Ibid.*, 19.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*, 12.
46. For a standard history of the Commune see Roger L. Williams, *The French Revolution of 1870-71*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1969).
47. Letters of Gustave Courbet, ed. by Ten-Doesschate Chu, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 416.
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*Vive la Commune! May, 1871*



# Swamp Fever, Primitivism & the "Ideological Vortex": Farewell to All That



by David Watson

A review of the following texts:

• *Green Apocalypse*, Luther Blissett, Stewart Home, and the Neoist Alliance (London: Unpopular Books [Box 15, 138 Kingsland High Street, London E8 2NS UK], 1996), £3.50

• *Into the 1990's With Green Anarchist*, Steve Booth (London: Green Anarchist Books [PO Box 407, Camberley GU15 3FL, England], 1996), £4

• *Green Anarchist* (BCM 1715, London WC1N 3XX, England, 5 issues / £3.75)

• debate on primitivism in *Transgressions: A Journal of Urban Exploration* (c/o Alistair Bonnett, Geography Department, University of Newcastle, Newcastle NE1 7RU, England, individual subscriptions £15 / year [two issues])

• *A Primitivist Primer*, John Moore (Dead Trees Earth First!, c/o South downs EF1 Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton, E. Sussex, England; Primitivist Network, PO Box 252, Rickmansworth, WD3 3AY, England), no date or price

• *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience*, Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier (Edinburgh and San Francisco: AK Press, 1995), \$7.00

"When at a banquet, where the guests have already over eaten, one person is concerned about bringing on new courses, another about having a vomitive at hand . . ."

Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*

## 1. An Ugly Dispute

According to its introduction, the essays and documents reprinted in the pamphlet *Green Apocalypse* "chronicle

David Watson begins this essay/review by commenting on a recent feud in England between so-called anarcho-primitivists and the post/pro-situationist Neoist Alliance. Despite the obscurity of the squabble and the minuscule number of people involved in it, the essay has important ramifications for people interested in cultivating a political orientation similar to that of the *Fifth Estate*—a green anarchist synthesis of primal and modern insights that can aid us in finding our way out of mass society and to a liberatory society.

"Swamp Fever" is in a sense an afterword to some of the discussion raised in Watson's recent critique of Murray Bookchin. In *Beyond Bookchin*, Watson defended the idea of a reasoned, neo-primitivist, neo-luddite orientation; here he considers some of the pitfalls and excesses of the primitivist sensibility as it has evolved in radical and anti-authoritarian circles. Not only the idea of primitivism, but the problematic character of ultra-left interventions is discussed; the question of the dangers of ecofascism now being widely debated is also taken up. The essay may seem somewhat obscure and unusual in its structure, but its ideas faithfully follow the threads of our original project—to challenge the modern megamachine in ways that make sense both theoretically and practically, to allow our ideas to evolve and become more nuanced in order to endure to fight another day.

We invite comments and responses of 500 words or less on this topic. Readers interested in contributing longer responses should contact us first.

—the FE Staff

an ugly dispute between *Green Anarchist* and the Neoist Alliance" in England. Ugly, indeed. Published by Unpopular Books (which takes as its logo, appropriately, a frowning "smile face"—an image simultaneously simple-minded and caustic), *Green Apocalypse* is the product of the Neoist Alliance, an iconoclastic group associated with post/pro-situationist gadfly Stewart Home. The Neoists are an amalgam of aesthetic vanguardism and ultra-leftish swagger; the Green Anarchists are influenced by a mix of eco-anarchism and U.S. anti-authoritarian and European ultra-left politics. Their feud has generated an abundant, confusing and rather fetid midden of materials. Only the most persevering investigator could decipher this mess; most people quite understandably won't bother.

But there is some reason to discuss these issues, as I hope will become clear in the course of this essay. Recently four editors of the *Green Anarchist* newspaper were charged with "conspiracy to incite criminal damage" and face up to ten years in prison. (See "Tales of the

Planet" in the Summer 1997 *Fifth Estate* for details.) At a time when the GAS face government repression, according to Luther Blissett (an author of *Green Apocalypse* and one of the principal protagonists of the dispute), the Neoist pamphlet and other materials demonstrate that *Green Anarchist* "is creating a new variety of fascism, which projects itself as having emerged from the left, but actually has its roots in the right." Identifying the GAS as fascists could undermine their appeals for support. No one has raided the Neoist lately.

Blissett's description is not of a new form of fascism but rather the classic variety. Fascism drew not only from conservative, nationalist rhetoric, and actual communal and ecological anxieties, but from a plebeian-leftist rhetoric as well. (The nazis were after all a "national socialist workers party.") Accusations of ecofascism are legion this season. Of course, fascists like everyone else can colonize ecology for their own purposes, and radical ecology types are as capable of passing over to rightism and fascism as some leftists and even

ultra-lefts have already proven to be. But finding superficial parallels between fascist misuses of ecological sensibilities and authentic ecological concerns (the defense of community, spirituality, small scale farming and technics, for example), is hardly evidence of ecofascism. Likewise, Blissett spends much time on what he considers to be the fascist implications of Bakuninism, but connects Bakuninism to GA mainly through a single line in a single book review. And because they supposedly read radical theory shallowly (which may be true), we are told, "it is not unfair" to describe GA's writing on such topics as the Situationist International "as a form of 'historical revisionism.'" This gives them "much in common with those other historical revisionists, the neo-Nazi 'intellectuals' . . ."

Such is the quality of the Neoist accusations throughout: exaggeration, obfuscation, indignation and bluff. While the text denies any "desire to demonize the individuals criticized," it slurs them as a "hate group" of "vile" ecofascists, "an ideological vortex or sucking pit," "thoroughly Bakuninist in both its incoherent theorizing and its reactionary activist practice," a "schizophrenic" cabal suffering from the "activist disease, or swamp fever." (Elsewhere, the Neoists praise the "energetic activism" of many members of the Green Anarchist Network as "an inspiration of others," only undermined by their association with a single member of GA. Just who is schizophrenic?)

## Shields and battering rams

It should be at least vaguely humbling to all the parties of this squabble that I was the only member of the *Fifth Estate* collective who felt compelled to read and respond to these documents. (In fact, probably a block away from the unfolding of their dramas no one even knows they exist, let alone understands



## The crux of the Neoist argument is simply a barren, unexamined defense of industrialism and mass technics.

their dispute.) Sadly, even though GAs seem to be involved in good work along with other radical ecology groups, *Green Anarchist* has not been read very closely here.

Nevertheless, I think this journal has some responsibility to address this squabble, even if we come to it late (and even if we decided to stop talking about it after having had our say). First of all, GA literature presents the FE as co-thinkers, or precursors, in what appears to be coalescing into a political tendency of "anarcho-primitivist" militants. Secondly, Blissett's essay in *Green Apocalypse*, "The Sucking Pit: How Green Anarchism Accelerates the Process of Decomposition within the Swamp," takes up my *How Deep Is Deep Ecology?* to flog *Green Anarchist* for misappropriating the book's arguments as "a rhetorical shield." In fact, Blissett degrades them into a rhetorical battering ram.<sup>1</sup>

The Neoists reveal their ignorance of ecological discourse, radical or otherwise, in their introduction, a facile discussion of the history of apocalyptic thinking. "Rooted in real concerns about the commodification of the environment," intones Neoist Richard Essex, the idea of ecological apocalypse "distracts the process of developing a strategy against such depredation with a mythic green crusade based on moral elitism rooted in universal justification." While there is some truth to this observation, we also need to keep in mind that the global greenhouse, the collapse of marine fisheries, the disappearing ozone layer and similar megatechnic disasters are more than mere examples of commodification. But rather than our being "on the verge of ecological disaster," he argues, "control over decent air to breathe [sic], water to drink, food to eat, will become another element of social control."

Such a mediocre (and anthropocentric, ethically obtuse) formulation fails to note that we are not on the verge of an ecological disaster but presently undergoing it; his own scenario of what is to come (also arguably apocalyptic, by his logic) is already the case. And whatever Essex means by "universal justification," the Neoists' pompous dismissal of the contemporary recognition of ecological catastrophe is based on their own marxist messianism. (As Blissett says in the *Transgressions* debate, "The overthrow of civilization is the task of communism." And elsewhere, the institution of communism is "the only means by which the proletariat can defeat fascism"—or in fact do much of anything, one gathers.)

The Neoists call malthusianism a "litmus test" of ecofascism, and GAs malthusians, therefore fascists. Yet they provide little more evidence than a line in *Green Anarchist* in which a writer



collage: James Koehnline

speculates that if the deadly Ebola virus that broke out in Zaire last year were to spread around the world, "all our over population [sic] problems will be over." Not having seen the original article, one cannot be entirely sure of the author's intent, but since no evidence is cited that GAs welcome such a possibility, it seems fairly innocuous. (In any case, given their own fascination with irony and ambiguity, the Neoists might have suspected some irony in the GA remark—if their own intentions weren't so transparently malicious.) Accused of neo-malthusian fascism by the Neoists, *Green Anarchist* replied that their population politics are essentially the pro-feminist, radical social justice perspectives of my *How Deep Is Deep Ecology?*, arguing that "current population levels aren't a problem but if they were, women's control over their own fertility would sort it . . . ." Blissett argues that this response "is more than just reductionist rhetoric, it destroys the logic of [the book's] argument." Sorry, but I don't see how the GA response destroys the logic of my argument, even if it doesn't fully explicate it.

### A barren defense of industrialism

If the GAs are malthusians, that would be no automatic "litmus test" of fascism, as the Neoists argue. Everything depends on context. But the Neoists haven't even proven the GAs are malthusians. Though they decry the lack of memory and sense of history

among "swamp inhabitants," Blissett and his comrades apparently learned little from the deep ecology debates of the late 1980s—debates which should have deepened everyone's ecological and political understanding. The Neoist brief, on the other hand, mostly damns the prosecution. It is a caricature of *Fifth Estate* polemics against catastrophist deep ecologists in the 1980s, superficially imitating our objections to explicitly right-wing (or at least ethically offensive) utterances made by EP'ers such as Christopher Manes, Dave Foreman, Daniel Conner and Edward Abbey. For example, Manes (as Miss Ann Thropy) did not merely note that a mass epidemic could render the population problem moot, but celebrated AIDS for its potential to do so. This might have passed as a sick joke, barely worth mention, had it not occurred in a larger context in which Conner published ostensibly scientific articles calling AIDS a conscious Gaian feedback, a revenge against human chauvinism. Meanwhile, Foreman advocated letting third world people die in famines as a natural (final?) solution, suggesting as well that the U.S. close its borders to refugees to keep them from stealing "our resources." Abbey agreed, calling Latin American immigrants "culturally-morally-genetically impoverished."<sup>2</sup> Nothing the Neoists cite from *Green Anarchist* comes even close to this kind of malignant prattle. Yet they think that repeating the same harmless quotes over

and over again "conclusively demonstrates" their case.

None of the Neoist accusations amount to much of anything. Supposedly, GAs are fascist because of their guerrillaist notion that third world revolutions in the periphery will encircle the industrialized center—a fatuous remnant of 1960s leftism, perhaps, but far from fascist. GA anti-tax posters, dating from the period of the early 1990s British poll tax revolt, are also cited, since "anti-tax agitation is a favoured tactic of the extreme right"—as if anarchists wouldn't have something to say about taxation, perhaps even to rightists, who also (we have to hope) have some latent human capacity to change sides, and become authentic radicals.

Around the time of the Persian Gulf War, everyone in the dispute agrees, *Green Anarchist* founder Richard Hunt went over to an explicit right-wing or ecofascist position. No movement is invulnerable to such corrosive political fragmentation and demoralization; to their credit, the GAs campaigned against Hunt, initiating a boycott of his new publication, *Green Alternative*. Neoists make much of Hunt's remark that England's population would have to be significantly reduced. But believing human population should be lowered in the interest of other species and ecological life-webs, indeed, in the interest of human beings—as people as diverse as liberal humanists Paul and Anne Ehrlich, deep ecologists like Gary Snyder, radical EP! wild women like Kelpie Wilson, anarcho-syndicalist biocentrists like Judy Bari, and I myself have all believed—does not automatically suggest death camps, holocaust or fascism. The desire for gradual transition to a planet with fewer people, a desire tempered by the recognition of interrelated ethical imperatives, is never even imagined by the Neoists. By their logic one could argue that given population necessities, the defense of wilderness, or of any non-human nature, might also imply fascism. If, as they also imply, any protest by rural society against modernization is inherently fascistic, one could as easily argue that any defense of former modes of life, or of craft, region, neighborhood, community or family is also fascist. But that would be an utterly specious argument.

In fact, the crux of the Neoist argument is simply a barren, unexamined defense of industrialism and mass technics. The Neoists naively believe that "Syndicalism shows that it is possible to have a complex industrial society without hierarchies," presumably not only at a 1930s level of development contemporary with the Spanish Revolution but with the technology of the 1990s. They insist that since GAs "don't explain how they plan to move from a complex mass society that can support a large population, to a world of small agricultural communities where there is less technology," they must be fascists. (Of course Neoists are no more explicit about how they plan to bring about communist social relations; maybe that makes them stalinists.) GA's desire to reduce or dismantle mass society's industrial work pyramid supposedly "necessitates a reduction in population levels if it is to be meaningfully implemented . . ." This argument is itself a sub-species of malthusianism masquerading as revolu-



tionary theory. The perspective of *How Deep Is Deep Ecology?* was that industrial capitalism, rather than artificially ensuring an otherwise impossible subsistence, was *undermining* age-old patterns of subsistence by its fabrication of an untenable form of industrialized existence, both in the short run and for the future, and that both malthusians and anti-malthusian defenders of industrialism labored under the same zero-sum ideology. To the Neoists, as to the deep ecology eco-catastrophists they oppose, *Green Anarchist* "attacks on what it calls technological 'mass society'" necessitate a commitment to a huge and presumably rapid reduction of the population. By this logic, Thorcau, Gandhi, Mumford, Ellul, ecofeminists, neoluddites, bioregionalists, even the *Fifth Estate* are fascists. But most of us know better.

#### Invisible dictatorships

Ironically, the Neoists accuse others of a sinister Bakuninism, but they themselves, with their explicit, stated program of scission, misinformation and scandal against anyone they disapprove of, resemble Nechaevite gangsters out to establish their own "invisible dictatorship." "Belief is the enemy," they declare, a conundrum they consider none other than "a watchword of the revolutionary movement"; and their flyers and texts attempt to scandalize by proclaiming, "End social relations," "Overthrow the human race," and the notorious fascist slogan, "Long live death." "Only the Neoist Alliance has grasped the necessary conjunction between nihilism and historical consciousness," they remind their bludgeoned reader. Their provocations can be singularly cowardly, as when they published a flyer falsely attributed to Salmon Rushdie announcing an event to burn the Koran in order to defy Islamic fundamentalists. Of course, not they but Rushdie has been sentenced to death by people quite willing to carry out the threat. Though they pronounce, "Humanity will not be happy until the last book bore is hung by the guts of the last mullah" (will people *ever* tire of such threadbare, antique provocations?), "book bore" Rushdie is, after all—as Neoist *subcomandante* M. Home has described *himself*, if ironically—only a "solitary" English novelist, and hardly deserving of an Islamic (or Neoist) *fatwa*.

The Neoists also produced and disseminated leaflets calling for death camps and praising Pol Pot, forgeries claiming to be from Green Anarchists. Of course, Home explains after the fact in *Green Apocalypse*, it's "clear to anyone who reads the text carefully" that it's a satire; the fact that some recipients of the flyer believed it to be authentic "demonstrates that the general level of intelligence in the world today is sorely lacking, and it is precisely this situation that makes GA's ideology dangerous"—which of course if the Neoists are as smart as they pretend to be they'd have to have known all along. Thus Home attempts to hold GAs responsible for the slanders he perpetrated on them.

Of course, Home concedes, "it would be unrealistic to expect [readers] to spot all the allusions we make, since no one can be expected to know *everything*." But Neoists refuse to take responsibility for what they say and write; one never

knows if they are speaking in their own voice (as when they warn the proletariat and the "revolutionary milieu" about fascist dangers), or if some other voice—irreverent, contrived, and mean-spirited—is being employed. These pomo poseurs dismiss those who "read our propaganda as though it were the product of an anchored authorial voice." Our explorations of the phenomenon of projection and unconscious mirroring illustrate the ways in which all ideology is shaped by discourse. . . . *Green Anarchist* writers are to be held responsible for every nuance, detail and potential interpretation of what they say; Neoists only "illustrate . . . discourse" (though one never knows to whom). They must enjoy being the only ones to know for sure if they are speaking or projecting. One is reminded of Nazi propaganda minister Goebbels' remark: "We do not talk to say something, but to obtain a certain effect."<sup>3</sup>

Thus the Neoists attack anti-fascism as bourgeois, reformist, perhaps counter-revolutionary—only to become crusading anti-fascists. They attack the lack of coherence among green radicals, only to argue that Neoists are "not interested in offering a coherent ideological program." They attack GAs for attempting to work with and organize other activists, but they themselves claim to provide "new 'idea-forces' which have an organizing effect" on their audience. Defining fascism as a kind of parasitic "vampire that feeds on real social movements," they attack these selfsame social movements as if to apply some perverse and pretentious anti-fascist chemotherapy. Rather than engaging others in some constructive way, they become a species of vampire themselves, turning their irresponsible vendettas into a kind of vanguardist careerism. As they themselves have commented, the Neoists need to consider how "anti-fascism . . . can very easily be transformed into its opposite, that is to say fascism." They would do well to take their own advice, which they frequently give to others (like the GAs), to *dissolve their group*. Everyone will benefit—from the trees that won't have to be cut for their pamphlets to the people delivered from Neoist noise, whether or not they inhabit a "swamp." (And get some metaphor other than this tired, leftist leftover; Thoreau called swamps nature's marrow.)

#### Militant spasms

Yet we can learn even from those who attack us; Green Anarchists would do well to take up the challenge to reexamine their perspective, and attempt to explain more coherently their ideas on population and other issues. Their emphasis (as Steve Booth puts it in his *Into the 1990's with Green Anarchist*) on "revolutionary action over theory" is a naive evasion of responsibility, since every action presumes some theoretical premise, however crude or inchoate. Reading GA say of such phenomena as the Unabomber, the Japanese Aum cult (which spread poison gas in Tokyo subways), and the Federal Building bombing in Oklahoma City that they are "inspirational and open up wide ranges of new possibilities," one has to conclude that like the broken clock that is correct at least every twelve hours, the Neoists have a point. This is also the case in

GA's clinging to and continuing to distribute early writings of Richard Hunt, whose reactionary tendencies (sexism, hierarchy and a defense of xenophobia, for example) are rightly pointed out by the Neoists, and grounds enough to scrap his dubious contribution altogether.

(In answer to criticisms of their glee over the Oklahoma bombing, the GA's response was even more disturbing: "We do think offing a towerblock full of FBI pigs is 'inspirational' *tactically*, just as we think IRA 'spectaculars' are . . ." This statement evinces little idea of just who might be passing through the halls of a typical local Federal Building (in fact there were almost no police agents in the building when the bomb exploded). Furthermore, it willfully disregards the intimate connection between means and ends; the GAs apparently think there is a clear division between right-wing militia and IRA nationalist ideologies (which they disapprove of) and the authoritarian, inhuman means employed (which they support).

The problem of theory and action is also immediately apparent in the banner of the GA newspaper (which reads, "For the Destruction of Civilization"), and the so-called "results pages" which Booth says are intentionally placed in the front of their publication. It is one thing to write critically about the dialectic of civilization and empire, its origins and contradictions, and to challenge the assumptions embedded in the ideology of progress. It's quite another to think you're forging a political tendency to carry out civilization's destruction. Whether or not it's Bakuninist, this is a fantasy contaminated by today's style of paranoid politics, an ugly and authoritarian fantasy at that, as is suggested by the passive-aggressive rage of the Unabomber text (which the GAs have published as an example, however flawed, of their tendency's position).<sup>4</sup>

Civilizations, most people know, destroy themselves. Radical greens, anarchist or otherwise, need to develop a constructive politics of solidarity, justice and renewal that moves beyond one-dimensional opposition to and unintelligible confrontation with mass society. I for one am disappointed that GA abandoned its banner slogan, "For a Free Society in Harmony With Nature," for the vague cage-rattling of "For the Destruction of Civilization." According to Booth, the change is "because the times have got more desperate, more urgent, and this is a more emphatic expression of our thinking"—reasoning which reminds me of the futile paroxysms of the SDS Weatherman faction in the late 1960s. Intoxicated by street-fighting with cops, and convinced conditions were now too dire to engage people openly in neighborhoods, schools and workplaces on a multiplicity of crucial social issues, this tiny band of authoritarian vanguardists decided to "bring the war home." They were sincere, and at times desperate, but things might be a little less dire now if they had not so thoroughly succumbed to their desperation then.

Though containing much that is laudable, *Green Anarchist* at its worst reads like someone shouting as loudly as possible to drown out any doubts about the enterprise. The "results pages"—various entries documenting alleged ecodefense

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and resistance—are a mixed bag, too. One may read of admirable endeavors and acts of resistance, but might just as easily run across questionable entries like rioting on October 27, 1996 by Islamic militants in Pakistan, and for September 28, 1996: "Kabul, Afghanistan—Taliban militia execute former president Najibullah, and suspend corpses from traffic platform. That's the way to do it!" Such macho militaristic vehemence makes one wonder if there isn't some fascistic character structure at play in GA enthusiasms after all. For November 1, we read that four are hurt by a car bomb in Spain; on November 8, "75 year old woman poppy collector robbed"; on November 11, "12-13 year olds slash bus driver" in Liverpool. A graphic shows a rat carrying a club with the logo, "Animal Liberation . . . or else!" Meat markets appear to be as evil as nuclear power plants. Antiprophets protest, gun owners rally, students protest tuition hikes; arson, "Hell's Angel club bombing, four injured." What does this have to do with radical theory or practice? What does GA stand for?

Like the *Green Anarchist* paper, Booth's pamphlet seems reasonable, decent, and heartfelt, despite its occasional questionable statements. Yet references to the end of the days of "Gandhian wank" and glamorized scenarios of demonstrations in which so-called "fluffies"—who are they, people with their kids in strollers?—are smashed up between brawling militants and cops, make me wonder if the GAs haven't lost all sense of proportion. It isn't simply a question of theoretical confusion, it's a matter of arrogance. As I have argued in other contexts, the more extreme our ideas the more



humble we should be about their application.' We should recognize that no one is exactly clear about how mass society might be transformed into a weave of diverse, egalitarian, communal cultures. Certainly we must find ways to act, but a spiraling, instrumental militancy (embracing the tactics, say, of IRA or militia "spectaculars"—a telling word), becoming ever more frenetic and violent as it becomes more dogmatic and self-righteous, is a recipe for a suicidal spasm. Green Anarchists need to reexamine their ideas closely, and continually, not only in the light of theory but in the light of reality.

## 2. Primitivists and parasites

Perhaps I've gotten some of this wrong; it's not easy to assess the plethora of tendencies, tracts and post office boxes, in England. Certainly, they get it wrong in Albion when talking about us; Booth's descriptions of *Green Anarchist's* American "anarcho-primitivist" influences, for example, are muddled, not only in some particulars but in the more serious failure to understand critical differences between the various voices that Booth mistakenly poses as a kind of school.

Damning evidence of such confusion can also be found in a debate in the Neoist-influenced journal, *Transgressions*. The debate is comprised of two articles—John Moore's "City Primeval: Fredy Perlman, Primitivism and Detroit," and Luther Blissett's reply, "From *Socialisme ou Barbarie* to Communism or Civilization." Moore, whom Booth's pamphlet calls "perhaps the leading British Primitivist," and who has recently penned *A Primitivist Primer*, looks every bit the bewildered anthropologist in his contorted description of Detroit and what he considers the origins of anarcho-primitivism. A friend who was involved in 1975 in turning the *Fifth Estate* into an antiauthoritarian journal commented with a laugh after reading this idealized field report that we ought to ask *Transgressions* for the address of the people Moore describes, since they seem awfully interesting.

However sympathetic he may be to this project, Moore's interpretation of Detroit is absurdly spectacularized—especially his highly ideological thesis that the impoverished, inner city, multi-racial, student/counter-culture neighborhood I live in and where the FE offices are located is the context for the evolution "from the late 1970s onward, into the praxis that has come to be called primitivism . . . also known as radical primitivism or anarcho-primitivism."

One can only ask here: *known by whom?* This portrayal of activities in which I happen to have participated does not remotely resemble reality. John: there is no such "primitivist praxis," unless one thinks discussion groups, flyers, strike-support, anti-war and environmental demonstrations, draft counseling, anarchist free spaces and soup kitchens, guerrilla theater, poetry readings, etc., somehow constitute a primitivist practice recognizably distinct from radical or anarchist activity in general.

This self-delusion reaches almost comic extremes; in scholastic fashion, and lacking any first-hand knowledge of the place, Moore constructs his thesis on

an extravagantly interpretive reading of a handful of texts. Hence, with relentless, procrustean zeal, he classifies an actual experience of spontaneous self-organization as a conscious, ideologically driven program, pronouncing a local anarchist temporary autonomous zone "a clear attempt to put primitivist—and Camattian—principles into action." The problem is that the space (which lasted only a couple of years) was not created by FE staffers or "Camattians" but by a group of young anarchists who were mostly reading anarchist classics, *Bolo Bolo* and Hakim Bey's *T.A.Z.*, and who, except for one or two exceptions on the periphery of the FE at the time, had nothing to do with this newspaper. Besides, nothing Moore cites about the anarchist spaces in Detroit distinguishes them from anarchist infoshops and storefronts anywhere else. His primer parallels this error, describing anarcho-primitivism as "a convenient label" for "diverse individuals with a common project: the abolition of all power relations—e.g., structures of control, coercion, domination, and exploitation—and the creation of a form of community that excludes all such relations." This is more or less simply *anarchism*; Moore's classifications are too convenient for their own good.

Perhaps the FE bears some blame for using the term "primitivist" at all in our desire to affirm and explore the meaning of aboriginal lifeways—an impulse which, with anthropologist Stanley Diamond, we believe to be a natural response to modern alienation, "consonant with fundamental human needs, the fulfillment of which (although in different form) is a precondition for our survival."<sup>6</sup> But to speak of the primitive does not require a political primitivism. The FE collective is not an organization or political "tendency"; our critical perspectives on civilization and technology, like our philosophical and ethical orientation in general, give us no qualitatively special insight into how to transform or dismantle mass society. Even Fredy Perlman, whose influences are erroneously represented by Moore's pamphlet and who is said to have provided "a primitivist theoretical agenda" in his poetic counter-story to progress, *Against His-story, Against Leviathan!*, insisted—as Moore notes without apparently understanding Fredy's implication—he was no "ist" of any kind except a *cellist*. Those tempted to establish a political tendency with its myth of origins, canon, genealogy and pantheon of luminaries should keep in mind that Fredy's last work was a novel, not a "theoretical agenda."<sup>7</sup>

### Farewell to ideological primitivism

Moore may disagree, but I was there, and even wrote some of the texts cited in his essay and primer (including "Renew the Earthly Paradise," from the Winter/Spring 1986 FE, which is misprinted in his text). Despite a disclaimer that it is "merely a personal account," and that, "Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as anarcho-primitivism or anarcho-primitivists," *A Primitivist Primer*, like Moore's *Transgressions* essay, borders on an attempt to codify a primitivist sensibility. Its catechism-like question-and-answer format and its indirect suggestion of primitivist taxonomy give it an "objective," descriptive au-

thority. It even comes with a kind of five-point action program. Phrases like "From the [the?] perspective of anarcho-primitivism" and "according to anarcho-primitivists" abound. Moore also marginalizes crucial, definitive differences between ostensible members of this apocryphal school.

One might blame the primer's confusion on difficulties inherent in summarizing or abbreviating any amorphous, diverse phenomenon; but considering the primer and the *Transgressions* essay together, Moore's attempt to classify and historically situate so-called primitivism based on what are mostly the activities, writings and ideas of others, particularly in the name of a movement which he has apparently founded, does look suspiciously parasitical (which Blissett accuses him of). It is worth noting that while Moore turns a few FE articles into the origins of a "current," an "anti-civilization movement," the people here in Detroit who wrote many of these articles not only have had important differences among themselves but have growing doubts about pretenses to an anarcho-primitivist perspective or movement.

For his part, Moore thinks this movement surpasses anarchism, feminism, etc., because it opposes not only manifestations but "the totality of civilization." Others categorized as anarcho-primitivists may share such abstract and self-serving formulations, but I believe the claim to oppose "the totality" of civilization is empty theoretical bravado, even if it sounds radical—like claiming to oppose "all" technology, which, unless we immediately draw careful distinctions between technology, techniques and tools, implies all things technical, and thus muddles any possibility of reasonable discussion about such matters. Moore makes the same error in a section entitled, "How does anarcho-primitivism view technology?" He answers, "Technology is the sum of mediations between us and the natural world and the sum of those separations mediating us from each other." Moore's definition of mediations may be different from mine, but it seems to me that to regard all mediations as unambiguous separations is to oppose inevitable mediations like language, music, symbolism, cooking, and even the most simple technical implements like the digging stick and the bowl. Moore's subsequent comment, that "anarcho-primitivists thus oppose technology or the technological system, but not the use of tools and implements," does little to clarify what the important differences between tools and a mass technological system might be.<sup>8</sup>

Opposition to *all* mediations may in fact define the outlook of a certain current of primitivism—all ten or twelve of them, I imagine. I wish them luck. But mediations may also connect, not just separate. We may marvel at the story of Diogenes, who threw away his drinking cup when he saw a boy drinking from his cupped hands, but this provides only a useful intuition into our inevitably ambivalent mediations, not practical guidance for dismantling the technological system and renewing a convivial technics in the world we find ourselves inhabiting today. In any case, however atrocious the process, conquest and domination have always been syncretic,

graphics/below: M. Rashid; rt.: Richard Mock



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dialectically unfolding into resistance; hence vernacular, communal and liberatory visions and practices persist, scattered throughout civilization like moments of our past embedded in amber. We need to nurture them. Such visions and practices are also, quite problematically, woven into the *sinews of civilization itself*. To "oppose" civilization as a totality—if one could be sure what that meant—could only imply somehow "opposing" not only the repressive and dehumanizing aspects of civilization but also the valuable and painful historical experience that has nurtured new insight—those hybrid flowers that have grown up between the cracks in the imperial monolith, and which we require in order to synthesize prehistory and post-modernity.<sup>9</sup>

I once asked Fredy Perlman how he thought we could embrace extra-rational spiritual insights of native peoples without surrendering to religious







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obscurantism, since they are both rooted in a kind of non-objective, epistemological gnosis. He said that we could not avoid walking a tightrope between Enlightenment rationalism, with its materialist theories, and spirit. To fall too far into either extreme was to capitulate to a distorted single vision. It seems to me that we derive our greatest insight from the tension between them, practicing a skepticism that does not allow itself to become an ultimate act of dogma. Thus, our alternative notion of "progress" might be that we've inevitably learned some things along history's way, things we didn't necessarily need to know before, but which are probably indispensable to us now.

"Anarcho-primitivism is an anti-systemic current," writes Moore. In that case perhaps I am an anarcho-primitivist; as time goes by and the primitivist idea becomes the reified object of sociological treatises and ideological agen-

das, I want less to do with it. There is nothing wrong with people gathering to talk about critical anthropology, technology, alternative epistemologies, the idea of a counter-history, progress and ideology, etc., as the Primitivist Network claims to do. But given the increasingly brief "shelf-life" of both ideas and ideologies in late modern capitalism, primitivism is less and less a nuanced orientation (held, we should constantly remind ourselves, by people facing the same challenges and duties as everyone else in this society), and more and more a fool's paradise, the dogma of a gang (in the "Camattian" sense, as it were), however irrelevant and however sincere—potentially even a racket.

What is militant primitivism, after all, given GA's apparent approval of various bizarre acts of social chaos and despair listed in their pages? Cheerleading apocalyptic collapse and violence evokes the Unabomber's recommendation that revolutionaries must "work to heighten the social stresses within the system so as to increase the likelihood that it will break down," a breakdown which would inevitably be "chaotic and involve much suffering." "We have no illusions about the feasibility of creating a new, ideal form of society," he writes. "Our goal is only to destroy the existing form of society."<sup>10</sup> This is like deep ecology catastrophism, which takes various manifestations of the disease for the remedy. Yet Booth's *Into the 1990's* lists the Unabomber alongside other supposed anarcho-primitivists like Perlman, the FE, Zerzan, etc., arguing that he "expressed the best and the predominant thinking in contemporary North American Anarchism. . . ."

Perhaps *Green Anarchist* thinks dismantling civilization means IRA-style "spectaculars," Aum-style home-made gas chambers, or Taliban-style street hangings—all under a primitivist rubric, of course. Marx once said of his epigones that he'd sown dragons only to reap fleas; I find myself wondering whether the few small fleas of reorientation and revolt I helped to plant didn't contribute to a harvest of dragons—clumsy, toothless, literal-minded, inflated dragons, perhaps, but no less embarrassing and depressing. What we now most need is not a primitivist Weatherman faction with its instrumental fulcrum politics and militaristic glamorization of entropic violence, but an inclusive, non-sectarian, undogmatic, green anarchist movement capable of making its insights understood, and capable, as cartoon character Snappy Sammy Smoot once advised in the 1960s, of smashing the state while keeping a song in its heart and a smile on its lips.

If green anarchists hope to influence even conscious minorities already committed to social change, let alone the large majority necessary to make significant change, they are going to have to cultivate tolerance, humility, patience, an ability to speak reasonably to people with whom they disagree and to cooperate on common projects with them. Surely, those are not only key aspects of the tribal societies many of us admire, but the proverbial seeds of the society of the future. Perhaps I'm the one glamorizing now, but I was impressed when I visited the anarchist community in Philadelphia a few years ago, where anarchists young and old and

of every possibly prefix found ways to work with each other and respect each other, and to accomplish some admirable projects. If we can't do that, despite our *conscious* philosophy of mutual aid, egalitarianism and justice, do we really think most people in mass society, with its ideological commitment to competitive individualism, greed, amoral violence and authoritarian power, ever will?

#### A hundred and one versions

Blissett is correct in the *Transgressions* debate when he criticizes Moore's "fetishizing [various Detroit anarchist projects] around primitivist ideology." But his own attempt to place FE neoluddism and primitivist sensibilities fully within left libertarian communism suffers from a similar hagiographic scholasticism. Hence very few of the connections he makes between our circle and other radical groups he thinks influenced us are relevant or even accurate. Succumbing to a simplistic sociology, Blissett argues that "the presence of an industrial working class centered around Detroit's motor industry" nurtured the FE and its perspectives—which must have *some* truth to it, relying as it does on the inescapable fact of our living here. But then he argues that deindustrialization and the eclipse of auto production in Detroit "fostered [the FE] critique of technology," reducing us to sociologically determined puppets.

It isn't just living in a deteriorating rust belt city like Detroit that brought about our views; massive urban-industrial development outside of the city was as much an influence as the collapse within. Blissett seems to think that if Detroit had undergone an economic-technological boom our neo-luddite outlook wouldn't have emerged. (In case no one has told him, industrialism continues to function in Detroit.) At any rate, given that people share our views in many diverse places, one can't seriously argue that these sensibilities are the product of our specific experience. Living in the late twentieth century under advanced capitalism's holocaust against nature and the human spirit—under the shadow of bureaucratic mass murder, nuclear blackmail, industrial mass contamination, biospheric meltdown, technological regimentation and pervasive social decomposition and alienation should be sufficient. Our personal experience in Detroit only has tangential significance.

The same goes for the sensibilities loosely called primitivism. As Blissett himself rightly says, "Ever since the Bible came out, civilization has produced a hundred and one literary visions of the simplicities of primitive life." As a social phenomenon, primitivism has existed since antiquity, wherever empires smashed and conquered once self-reliant communities, and the empire's inmates resisted, remembering and longing to reconstitute the original tribal circle ("primitive" means original). Like all movements of contestation and revolt, of course, these impulses and sensibilities have had an ambiguous character. Potentially radical or reactionary, revolutionary or conservative, dangerously capable of bringing about new empires, they are always in some way transgressive. (Let us remember that the most famous primitivist movement of

late antiquity was christianity, a primitive communist movement. Eventually an increasingly hierarchalized, orthodox church became an integral part of the reconstituted empire. Original primitive christian impulses continue to generate movements of both radical and reactionary significance after two millennia.)

It's ludicrous to claim, as Blissett does, that the critique of civilization emerged internationally within the ultra-left milieu, and that therefore, "The overthrow of civilization is the task of communism" (Blissett's own version of primitivism). Neither the Earth First! primitivist types who coined the slogan, "Back to the Stone Age!," and with whom we debated deep ecology in the late 1980s, nor the primitivist hippy radical types in Earth First! and other radical environmental groups today came from the ultra-left. Nor have most people in the U.S. who are sympathetic to ideas that might loosely be described as "primitivist." Many found them in the American transcendentalist tradition, especially in our own taoist anarchist hermit, Henry David Thoreau, or in European romanticism's protest against scientific objectivization of nature and industrialization, or in the bioregionalist vision of Mumford, the Buddhist economics of Schumaker, the *satyagraha* of Gandhi, the perennial wisdom of archaic and vernacular societies and literatures and plenty of other sources.

People who express values and ideas critical of industrialism and modern civilization usually started by directly witnessing industrial capitalist pillage of some favorite green place, and exposure through reading or travel to the lifeways and philosophies of native peoples, particularly American Indians. This is the vision to which Fredy Perlman turned when he abandoned the "framework," as Blissett calls it, of the international left-communist current, no matter how much it influenced him. In fact, one might explain this development as the actual unfolding of Lakota writer Chief Luther Standing Bear's prediction in his classic essay, "What the Indian Means to America": the white invader, he said, was "too far removed from its formative processes" to understand the American continent. "The roots of the tree of his life have not yet grasped the rock and soil. . . . But in the Indian the spirit of the land is still vested; it will be until other men are able to divine and meet its rhythm. Men must be born and reborn to belong. Their bodies must be formed of the dust of their forefathers' bones." Slowly men and women have been born and reborn; this new sensibility may mean that the roots of the tree of our lives are beginning to grasp rock and soil.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, not surprisingly, the radical nostalgia for former lifeways which Moore identifies with the anarcho-primitivist movement is actually to be found in diverse manifestations among a spectrum of social groups. Both fruitful insights and nonsense can be found in the primitivist impulse, but it isn't always easy to distinguish healthy skepticism from repressive rationalism, crazy wisdom from self-delusion. That is for the whole society to work out in a spirit of open-minded tolerance. If rationalists are deluded in thinking that a hypothetical, authentic "progress" (rather than



"real-existing" progress) validates their claims to ultimate historical rationality, self-proclaimed primitivists are at least as deluded in thinking they have a simple answer to the riddle of prehistory and history.

The fact that primitivist longings found expression as varied as Gandhian *satyagraha* and the fascist mystique, in movements both revolutionary and reactionary, should alert us to their psychic depth and intimate, ambivalent connection to the unfolding of human self-realization. We continue to experience the trauma of the dissolution of human community by the earliest empires, and the challenge of how to renew communal life, necessarily and inescapably on a new level. Some people suspect this challenge means healing ourselves and our societies after a relentlessly bad and meaningless trip rowing aimlessly in the dark depths of civilization's galley ship, rather than reciting the dialectician's dogma of a yet-unfulfilled evolutionary promise that required our being expelled from paradise *in order to renew it* (as Bookchin's version of the fairy tale has it). This refusal to genuflect to progress is hardly evidence of fascism. But it still demands far more circumspection than is evidenced by Green Anarchists.

### 3. Ecofascism and anti-ecofascism

This brings us back to the question of



In this country we have far less to worry over the kind of vegetarian hippy pagan deep ecologists whom social ecologists consider nascent fascists than we do from the people we might meaningfully call "ecofascists," who are more likely to crucify spotted owls, harass activists and plant bombs like the one meant to kill Judy Bari and Darryl Cherney.

ecofascism. Biehl's and Staudenmaier's *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience* may be helpful in warning that, as Staudenmaier argues, "'Ecology' alone does not prescribe a politics; it must be interpreted, mediated through some theory of society in order to acquire political meaning." In their joint introduction, Biehl and Staudenmaier note that "ecological ideas have a history of being distorted and placed in the service of reactionary ends—even of fascism itself." Yet despite some useful insights and historical research (and Biehl's painful exposure of Rudolf Bahro's apparent total intellectual and political deterioration in her essay, "'Ecology' and the Modernization of Fascism in the German Ultra-Right"), this small book delivers equal doses of confusion and clarity. Staudenmaier begins his essay, "The 'Green Wing' of the Nazi Party and its Historical Antecedents," by conceding that radicals often carelessly misuse "epithets like 'fascist' and 'ecofascist,' thus contributing to a sort of conceptual inflation that in no way furthers effective social critique." Unfortunately, this book makes just such an error.<sup>12</sup>

It is worth repeating that in the U.S., ultra-rightism and fascism have mostly taken a militantly anthropocentric, pro-industrial development, "cornucopian" anti-population limitation expression (though a right-wing malthusian, anti-immigration movement also exists). In this country we have far less to worry over the kind of vegetarian hippy pagan deep ecologists this book implies are nascent fascists than we do from those hysterical property-rights hordes who (like the Nazi Party in its early days as a street-fighting, strike-breaking gang) are highly funded by corporate interests and mobilized against authentic grassroots groups. Except for a few fringe fascists who appropriate ecological rhetoric to a white racist biologism, the people we might meaningfully call "ecofascists" are more likely to crucify spotted owls, harass activists and plant bombs like the one meant to kill Judy Bari and Darryl Cherney.<sup>13</sup>

In Europe the problems raised by this book are more obvious. In two regions of France local leaders of the Green Party entered into an alliance with Jean Marie Le Pen's fascist National Front, which calls itself "the only true ecological party" and demands political decentralization, nature preservation, and an end to nuclear power—and limits on immigration and the rights of resident aliens. This phenomenon is occurring throughout the continent. According to one anti-fascist researcher, many of the concerns of left and right coincide, such as grassroots localism, struggles against pollution, a sympathy for rural values and small-scale enterprise, and respect for nature. But race—the color line, which W.E.B. DuBois identified as "the problem of the twentieth century"—is the dividing line between ecologies. For right-wing environmentalists, according to journalist Mark Shapiro, "this means a hierarchical social order, with the races separated in their own niches of the globe"; for the mostly left and liberal environmentalists, "it usually means respect for the varied parts of shared ecosystems."<sup>14</sup>

The Biehl-Staudenmaier book, however, is far too scattershot in its critique;

it fails to draw the important distinction between apolitical sensibilities unprepared by their lack of social critique to resist fascism and an inferred fascist potential in these sensibilities themselves. Of course, Biehl's associate Murray Bookchin is also notorious for accusing nearly anyone with whom he disagrees—from real right-wingers and potential ecofascists to liberal humanists, deep ecologists, Christians, Buddhists and radicals like this paper—of being "misanthropic" ecofascists. "[S]ome of the themes that Nazi ideologists articulated bear an uncomfortably close resemblance to themes familiar to ecologically concerned people today," Biehl and Staudenmaier explain. Because right-wing ideologues today employ rhetoric emphasizing "the supremacy of the 'Earth' over people," and perpetrate a "hi-jacking of ecology for racist, nationalistic and fascist ends," Biehl and Staudenmaier warn against mystical and antirational attitudes now "being intertwined with ecofascism." But it never occurs to them that, like ecology, mysticism and other spiritual traditions might also be getting hijacked for purposes other than their actual intent. For Biehl and Staudenmaier, however, the mere act of any kind of sociobiological speculation or expression of cultural manifestations as diverse as sufism, zen, deep ecology, holistic nutrition, organic farming, vegetarianism, nature worship, or concern with holistic organicism, is a flag signaling potential ecofascism.

By their logic, of course, ecology itself is automatically and inherently suspect. Not only do "ecological ideas have a history of being distorted and placed in the service of highly regressive ends," as they argue, ecology from its inception served to legitimate the racist and elitist rule of the European upper classes over both their own lower classes and the "colored races" in the colonies. It should come as no surprise that Ernst Haeckel, who coined the term "ecology," was himself a reactionary racist, who (as Staudenmaier reports), laid the groundwork for Nazi racist pseudo-science and its murderous eugenics programs. Trapped within their political agenda, these social ecologists do not seem to understand such critical distinctions, and thus undermine their genuine insights. Staudenmaier not only attacks romanticism as implicitly fascist (when in fact both left and right drew from the romantic movement), he worries about the "ideological overlap between nature conservation and National Socialism," adding, "The Nazi state also created the first nature preserves in Europe." That Nazi official Alwin Seifert (whose official title was "Reich Advocate for the Landscape") "opposed monoculture, wetlands drainage and chemicalized agriculture" apparently makes all such opposition suspect. (At the same time, it should be mentioned, the marxist scientific rationalists in the Soviet Union were contemplating the liquidation of nature that could not be made to serve human ends.<sup>15</sup>)

Hitler, Staudenmaier says, "could sound like a veritable Green utopian, discussing authoritatively and in detail various renewable energy sources . . . and declaring 'water, winds and tides' as the energy path to the future." In fact, some Nazi rhetoric brings to mind even

the language of eco-anarchist Murray Bookchin himself; *Reichsminister* Fritz Todt, for example, demanded that technology bring about "a harmony with nature and with the landscape, thereby fulfilling modern ecological principles of engineering as well as the 'organological' principles of his own era," and Seifert insisted that work methods "more attuned with nature" be found—all language similar to Bookchin's idea that human urban and agricultural infrastructures be tailored to fit their landscape, leaving only "a gentle, human imprint on nature," encouraging a renewal of a "sense of oneness with nature that existed in humans from primordial times."<sup>16</sup>

Biehl's exposé of Rudolf Bahro is damning. Bahro, once an independent socialist dissident expelled from East Germany and then a provocative anti-industrial Green, now calls for a theocratic-ecological invisible world government, and argues that the ecology-peace movement must "redeem Hitler," reclaim "the positive that may lie buried in the Nazi movement," and "liberate" the "brown parts" in the German character, the "call in the depths of the *Volk* for a Green Adolf." Bahro claims this would be "an entirely different Adolf" which Germans need in order to find their "roots, the roots from which will grow that which will save us." Bahro's tortured mysticism will likely win few converts to neofascism; it is probably unacceptable even to German rightists, who would not react well to his identification of the roots of the ecological crisis in the "sickness" of "white Nordic humanity." He could even be arguing for a way to respond creatively to authentic concerns and utopian yearnings by integrating the dark side of human personality. But if he is, his views are so incoherent and obviously dangerous that they can sow only the most destructive whirlwind.

Yet none of this invalidates positive aspects of Bahro's earlier work as a socialist dissident or his radical anti-industrial politics.<sup>17</sup> Nor is Bahro's problem that he is mystical; it is rather the content and context of his mysticism, unless anti-ecofascist crusaders Biehl and Staudenmaier are prepared to argue that anarchist mystics like Gustav Landauer, Martin Buber, Dorothy Day and others were also by definition proto-fascists. As Staudenmaier recognizes, "Even the most laudable of causes can be perverted and instrumentalized in the service of criminal savagery." Thus one can be a fascist vegetarian or a libertarian communist vegetarian, a revolutionary anarcho-syndicalist deep ecologist or an elitist, reactionary deep ecologist. I dare say one could even be a fascist social ecologist, everyone's interpretation and self-definition being subjective, and grounds for an argument.

Staudenmaier is wrong to imply that fascism can be detected simply in a defense of intuition or in the belief that humans should live according to some idea of natural order, or in the wish to "reform society according to nature." After all, even social ecology claims to conform or respond to an idea of nature. Rather, fascism is identified by its authoritarian statist politics, its militarism, its nationalism and racial mystique. Religious rebels, we should remember, were among the most courageous and



uncompromising opponents within Germany to the fascist regime, and many paid with their lives.<sup>18</sup>

#### A narrow rationality

The Staudenmaier-Biehl argument tends to slide into a "Nazis liked organic farming therefore organic farming is potentially fascistic" schema. They are so suspicious of anything spiritual that Staudenmaier labels rightist (as if reactionaries were the only ones to express it) even the idea that modern technological society has "perpetrated not only the destruction of nature but an annihilation of the spirit," and that "the destruction of nature . . . is life-threatening in the spiritual sense as well as the physical . . ." This notion may sometimes come from right-wing obscurantism, but it is also a valid phenomenological insight. Staudenmaier's stiff dismissal of this idea smacks of the very rationalistic failure of the left in Germany to communicate with the authentic anxieties and psychic needs that the fascists exploited, and which writers like Wilhelm Reich and Daniel Guérin have noted.<sup>19</sup> Yet Staudenmaier mentions in passing that there is no "inherent or inevitable connection between ecological issues and right-wing politics; alongside the reactionary tradition surveyed here, there has always been an equally vital heritage of left-libertarian ecology, in Germany as elsewhere." This admission leads one to suspect that the relation of ecology to politics is far more complex than the scenario the authors present. Unfortunately they provide no accounting of this eco-radicalism.<sup>20</sup>

The question of technology—if I may be allowed a phrase once used by Heidegger without my being automatically smeared as a fascist—is equally ambiguous. Fascism both embraced and showed an aversion to modern technology and industrialism. As Jeffrey Herf has pointed out, "the German intellectual and cultural Right in Weimar and the Third Reich rejected much of political and cultural modernity, including Enlightenment rationality, while it embraced modern technology." Explains Herf, "The high priest of cultural pessimism after World War I, Oswald Spengler, called for a priesthood of engineers to establish a technologically advanced authoritarian state. Ernst Juenger . . . saw in technology a welcome authoritarian and totalitarian alternative to the fragmentation of bourgeois society, as well as a source of hope for Germany's future international regeneration. Carl Schmitt and Hans Freyer saw in technology under state control a welcome alternative to the domination of the economy over society. Werner Combar juxtaposed German productive technology with Jewish parasitic capitalism . . ." Typically (and sounding like certain social ecologists today), such ideologues "associated technology with an intrinsic aesthetic creativity, a clarity of form, and a use-value that they contrasted with the misuse of technology in an economy driven by exchange value. The Nazis incorporated many of these themes of the anticapitalist intellectual Right into their propaganda of a technologically modern German racial state that had burst the fetters on technological development—fettters, they argued, imposed by the 'Jewish' Weimar Republic."

He elaborates, "Exponents of traditional anti-technological views did find a place in the Nazi hierarchy. Racism did draw on antiurban, agrarian, preindustrial utopias. But enough of the leading intellectual and political figures of the movement, party, and regime embraced ideas similar to [the totalitarian-traditionalist yet pro-technology] reactionary modernism to justify a revision of our view of Nazism as a movement driven by ideological hostility to technology." In fact, "By 1939 the Nazis were claiming that the terrible effects of technology had been corrected by the National Socialist revolution of 1933. The official view of technology was anything but pessimistic and Goebbels himself went to great lengths to denounce technological pessimism as a legacy of 'bourgeois reaction' which could not grasp the rhythms and 'hot impulses' of the *stählernde Romantik* of the twentieth century." When a romantic technological pessimism returned to German politics, Herf adds, "it did so on the Left rather than the Right."<sup>21</sup>

In fact, outside of its basic authoritarian program, fascist demagoguery has varied according to its needs. Fascists employed as much socialist and anti-capitalist rhetoric as ecology in their attempt to gain followers. No one would argue that this makes talk of socialism a sign of potential fascism. Context matters. Nazi agitator Gregor Strasser employed a nationalist and socialist mix in his propaganda, attacking "international finance capital [which] means the end of all possibility of social liberation . . . the end of all dreams of a socialist Germany." The Nazi cadres, he said, were "ardent socialists . . . waging the fight against capitalism and imperialism incarnated in the Versailles treaty . . ." The Nazi Party, according to Daniel Guérin, "supported extensive movements for labor demands. For instance, in October, 1930, it supported the strike of the Berlin metal workers, in which 100,000 workers took part. In November, 1932, it, together with the communists, instigated the Berlin transport strike." In Italy, the fascists won peasants to their cause by demanding "land for those who till it."<sup>22</sup>

Bookchin, Biehl et al also make much of a fascist holistic organicism, but in fact the appeal of organicism was understandably widespread as industrialism expanded into every sphere of life, bringing with it social dislocation, disasters, and mass displacement of populations. The organicism and holism of figures such as Lewis Mumford, Siegfried Giedion and Aldo Leopold could hardly be called expressions of fascism. Fascism responds to and exploits authentic sensibilities for its own purposes; people susceptible to authoritarianism and racist dehumanization of various others are sometimes won to fascism by organicist arguments and sensibilities, sometimes by the worship of modernization and industrial technology's prowess.<sup>23</sup>

The narrow rationality exemplified in Biehl's and Staudenmaier's text, and their lack of distinction between the opportunistic exploitation by rightists of ecological concerns and sensibilities, and the causes and concerns themselves, turns a potentially important work into a mixture of insight and sectarian folly. We undermine our capacity to expose



**We undermine our capacity to expose and neutralize fascist ecomysticism when we label all ecomysticism as fascist; we surrender the terrain to fascist and authoritarian spiritual obscurantism in our failure to comprehend the deep human need to embrace spirit.**

and neutralize fascist ecomysticism when we label all ecomysticism as fascist; we surrender the terrain to fascist and authoritarian spiritual obscurantism by failing to comprehend the deep human need to embrace spirit. As Joel Kovel has argued eloquently, spirituality is not simply a false or alienated response to class oppression but is rooted ontologically in human being itself—in "the general predicament of our species: general discontinuity with the rest of being," and "the opaque mystery of consciousness." It is powerful because it is an "interrogation of being from the standpoint of nonbeing [with] no discrete answer to the interrogation and therefore no prescribed spirituality."

Spirituality cannot be explained away as "irrational" and alienated pseudo-consciousness. "Undoubtedly official

religion alienated the essence of spirituality as a way of enforcing subservience to temporal power. But something had to be there in order to be alienated."

Kovel argues that we are not therefore, left to make an Augustinian leap of absurd faith: "For while there can be no positive proof of the independent existence of the spirit realm, and therefore no 'spiritual science' as such, we are still able to say whether the dimension of spirituality makes human existence as a whole more coherent. We are still able to think about whether human beings are more intelligible, more fully themselves, when considered spiritually or through the lens of despiritualization; and whether history becomes more intelligible, whether the ceaseless struggle of classes, the fitful march of progress, the astounding and horrific abyss over which history tecters, all become





Perhaps just as a more organic, deeper notion of reason requires continual self-examination along the blurred line between critical rationality and diverse modes of intuition, our ecological politics might think of humanity as both a single leaf on nature's tree and something more . . .

clearer."<sup>24</sup> When we tar as "atavistic" and potentially fascist people's natural reaction against the alienating and spirit-destroying nature of mass techniques, we surrender this deeply reasonable impulse to fascist demagogues who will one day decry technology's horrors and the next proclaim its glorious destiny. Thus in a sense we commit the same narrowly rationalistic errors made by earlier anti-fascists.

Biehl and Staudenmaier claim to "see the roots of the present ecological crisis in an irrational society—not in the biological makeup of human beings, nor in a particular religion, nor in reason, science or technology." "At the heart of the *völkisch* temptation was a pathological response to modernity," Staudenmaier writes. It never occurs to them to ask where the irrationality of an irrational society comes from, or to consider the pathology of modernity itself. Sixty years after the failure of Guérin's analysis to grapple adequately with the otherness of the irrational, they insist they "uphold the importance of reason, science and technology in creating both a progressive ecological movement and an ecological society." They never reflect on the fundamental irrationality of this society's "reason, science and technology," and why people rightfully mistrust them, turning instead to various forms of spirituality and intuition, be they liberatory and humanizing, or repressive and dehumanizing. Upholding rationality and science to rescue ecology from potential fascism, they don't notice that right-wing objectivist rationalists similarly employ scientific rationalism to oppose even the mildest environmental

reform.

In the early 1970s, a leftist group steeped in a rationalist, materialist doctrine—one in some ways more sophisticated than those of many other such leftist groups in its appeal to a broad left tradition beyond simplistic Leninism—published provocative social critiques of the counter-culture and the budding environmental movement as having parallels to and even intellectual roots in fascism. According to this group, the anti-technology sensibility, with its respect for labor-intensive farming and similar approaches, was mere mystification for a deepening capitalist austerity similar to the Nazi "strength-through-joy" ideology. Glorification of "Nature" (always in quotes) as a supreme value was a religious obscurantism that lined up hippy environmentalists with the supposedly proto-Nazi German *wandervogel* of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This group posed a rational scientific alternative steeped in Hegel, Marx and Luxemburg, noting the resemblance of anarchist (lifestyle anarchist?) rhetoric to "Mussolini's anti-Marxist demagoguery . . . ." Anarchism, they argued, "because it is the extreme political expression of *bourgeois* individualism inevitably gives birth to fascism . . . The rock-drug 'counter'-culture, ideological expression of anarchism, is likewise merely a particularly vicious extension of previously existing bourgeois cultural trends."

Like Staudenmaier and Biehl, this organization was careful to deny that all expressions of rock or other counter-culture manifestations were automatically fascist. Nevertheless, one editorialist continued, "The world view implicit in that culture, if extended, would lead to specific social relations. The world-view of the rock culture is a return to a state of animality and a celebration of barbarism under the guise of 'liberation.' It is no more than the symbolic celebration of the monstrously inhuman existence that capitalism has created . . . ." This group published excerpts from Guérin on proto-fascist youth counter-cultures in pre-Nazi Germany, along with graphics from 1920s and 1930s Germany and the 1960s showing strikingly similar pagan motifs. This decadent irrationality had to be fought, and was even rampant among the left.

"Purely phenomenal perception," argued the theoretical journal of this group, "deliberately avoiding the development of critical awareness, leaves people in a state of helplessness in which they will submit to any onslaught, including fascism, which emerges as a social force."

In its clarion defense of rationality against dangerous irrationality, and in its epistemological determinism, this warning against proto-fascist tendencies seems only a slightly more marxist version of Bookchin's *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism* and other social ecology texts decrying deep ecology misanthropes and ecofascists.<sup>25</sup> Of course, this earlier display of militant antifascism, the National Caucus of Labor Committees, soon began a campaign of vicious physical assault against various rival leftist groups in 1973 before going on to reconstitute itself, under the leadership of Lyndon LaRouche, as the U.S. Labor Party—a genuine fascist group if there ever was one. Thus the defense of rationality spawned extreme

and violent irrationality, and anti-fascism became, as the Neoists like to point out, not potential but *actual* fascism.<sup>26</sup>

#### Remembering our limits

One can understand Biehl's and Staudenmaier's reasons for publishing their essays on the potential and actual colonization of ecological sensibilities by fascists. The parallels between Weimar German culture and fascist ideological motifs, and aspects of contemporary culture and ideology are striking.<sup>27</sup> Since the Second World War, fascism has persisted throughout the world in forms both classic and new, and is growing, while what is valuable in socialism and the anti-capitalist tradition has been rolled back by the New World Order, along with state socialism and most of the authoritarian left. Their book at least raises issues it cannot adequately clarify about the disturbing connections between dangerous ideologies and our cherished ecological sensibilities. Given the capacity of authoritarian movements (left and right) to capture our love of nature and desire for community, our alienation from the modern world and our desire for justice, we cannot presume we are invulnerable to political despair and authoritarian reaction.

This is not because spirituality, or zen, or sufism, or vegetarianism, or any belief in natural law, or ecocentric ideas, or a respect for traditional rural communities, or even misanthropy is intrinsically fascist or any more fascist than rationalism, loyalty to science or marxian dialectics. Any belief or sensibility can become fascistic—context matters. After all, the "religion of nature" embraced by the Nazis claimed both spirit and hard science. It also mixed truth with fantasy. In his book *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature*, Robert A. Pois quotes Hitler's comment, "At the end of the last century the progress of science and technique led liberalism astray into proclaiming man's mastery of nature and announcing that he would soon have dominion over space. But a simple storm is enough—and everything collapses like a pack of cards." Pois observes that "this statement, which obviously has more than a grain of truth in it," sounds "remarkably like contemporary environmentalists." Of course, not fascism but common sense reminds us that nature strikes back. Nor is it proto-fascist to treat with acerbic skepticism scientists' bland reassurances that the catastrophes brought about by urban-industrialism can be managed.

Pois argues that relatively little attention has been paid to German fascist attitudes about nature at least in part because "in certain crucial aspects, National Socialism was very much in the mainstream not only of German but of Western philosophical and religious developments." The Nazi world view "embodied within it elements that have existed as Western civilization's alter ego from time to time"—not only its violent messianism, but perhaps more importantly the anxiety about humanity's inescapable differentiation which leads people to seek a way to be *in* or *of* nature. According to Pois, "This approach is one that has not been confined to woebegone romantics in full

flight from modernity . . . but began with the crude scientism of the Enlightenment." Enlightenment natural science itself began the process which rooted human beings in nature as "just one species among many" (the phrase which causes social ecologists to reach for their revolvers), while at the same time ranking people for the purposes of social domination. The rise of nationalism and reactionary racial myths intertwined with mystical demagoguery and scientific rationalism contributed both to late-nineteenth century imperialist rationales and to twentieth century fascism.

"Though for the most part eschewing notions of race and racial supremacy, modern environmental concerns are in part rooted in this general tradition," avers Pois. But he adds an important qualification: "As we have seen, National Socialist ideologues were in no small way concerned that man, or at least some men, live in harmony with the environment and, appreciating the fact that this is obviously necessary, we must recognize that just because something happens to have been emphasized by people as despicable as the Nazis does not make it wrong. Man is, at least in part, rooted in the natural world, a world too often viewed as being a simple object for exploitation. In their own version of the 'natural religion,' however, their *Lebensphilosophie*, the National Socialists exemplified a pernicious tendency that must be of special concern for anyone who chooses to see man as a product of some deified nature, and nothing more than that."<sup>28</sup>

And nothing more than that—the key idea in the last line. The Nazis practiced one version of nature religion, not the only one. (Goethe practiced another. So did Standing Bear.) Perhaps just as a more organic, deeper notion of reason requires continual self-examination along the blurred line between critical rationality and diverse modes of intuitive extra-rationality, our ecological politics might think of humanity as both only a single leaf on nature's tree and something more than that. In their own hideous way, the Nazis themselves are proof of human uniqueness, though we can find far more worthy examples. The problem with their claim to a non-anthropocentric view was not so much its lack of scientific "objectivity" or "rationality" but its lack of humanity, which, interestingly, is to a great degree a question of spiritual and intuitive sensibilities. Like that of the misanthropes whom the *Fifth Estate* debated in the late 1980s, Nazi misanthropy was highly selective. And their pseudo-naturalism was a racist cult based on exclusion, conflict and cruelty—exclusion, conflict and cruelty they were willing to perpetrate on others. Similarly, the difference between, say, organic farming motivated by some sense of spiritual connection to the soil and organic farming for the sake of some exclusive "fatherland" should be easy enough to discern. We should be able to identify such ideas when we encounter them, and learn how to deal with them, without having to resort to a rationalism that ends up legitimating that other fascism, that other fatherland: liberal democratic capitalist (or promethean leftist, if you like) progress with its ultimate totalitarianism of a bioengineered technopolis.

It also helps to remember the limits



of our theories, to remember that our ideas about nature must always be considered in light of what they say about our obligations to the human community and what kind of social relations they imply. As Langdon Winner has put it, "Nature will justify anything. Its text contains opportunities for myriad interpretations. The patterns noticed in natural phenomena and the meanings given them are all matters of choice . . . It is comforting to assume that nature has somehow been enlisted on our side. But we are not entitled to that assumption."<sup>20</sup> Green anarchists, deep ecologists, social ecologists and the rest of us have all been guilty of that error to one degree or another. We all need to tread carefully, mindful of our world and the world we say we desire.

#### 4. Down the vortex

And so I've now gone down the ideological vortex, too, I'm afraid, in some cases arguing obscurely with people I might have ignored and by whom I might have perhaps been thankfully ignored as well. I've been wrestling with a tar baby. But not for very much longer. I began this essay-review out of a sense of responsibility to a radical green movement that takes the ideas printed in this paper seriously. I felt a perhaps quixotic need to avoid being misunderstood, and to examine how my ideas have evolved so as to prevent them from becoming a species of bad faith, the kind in which our earlier ideas persist in gnawing at the tail of our thoughts today. John Moore might understand this, interested as he is in the phenomenon of ecdysis, or the shedding of the skin. As Nietzsche commented in *The Dawn*, "The snake that cannot shed its skin perishes. So do the spirits who are prevented from changing their opinions, they cease to be spirit."<sup>20</sup>

My opinions have not really changed, but I do not wish to belong to them. I have no interest in building bunkers on them. When people ask me, "Are you an anarchist?" I usually reply in a friendly tone, "Yes—unless you are." Similarly, when I'm accused of being a communist, I often say, "Yes—a primitive communist." One hopes the humor in both replies offers an opening for conversation, that is all. But that is all we can expect. Taking such labels too seriously obscures the real work of renewing the social and ecological harmony lying latent in our own daily life. (Like opposition to civilization's "totality," by the way, self-righteous high-decibel neo-situationist fulminations against the entirety of daily life under capitalism forget that an enormous part of life is spent nurturing children, engaging in acts of mutual aid, trying to be understood or to understand what others are saying, co-operating in common projects and sometimes even subversive activities, etc.—a few examples of what I have elsewhere described as living both within and against mass society.)

Calling oneself a primitivist, or pretending that the origins of the authoritarian plague can be ultimately explained, helps little in this regard. The lessons of a primitivist sensibility come from the perennial (counter-) tradition, and thus are rewarding and offer deep insights, but they are nevertheless general enough, and too close to fundamen-

tal life intuitions, to yield any definitive practical answers to our problems, or even a theory (which is a manifestation of scientific rationality, not primal truths). "The concept of the primitive is as old as civilization," writes Diamond, "because civilized men have always and everywhere been compelled by the conditions of their existence to try to understand their roots and human possibilities." "The search for the primitive," he says in another context, "is the attempt to define a primary human potential. Without such a model (or, since we are dealing with men and not things, without such a vision), it becomes increasingly difficult to evaluate or understand our contemporary pathology and possibilities." For example, he explains, unless we work to rediscover "the nature of human nature," medical science may survive (and, one must assume, in the form of a bioengineered nightmare world), "but the art of healing will wither away. For healing flows from insight into primary, 'pre-civilized' human processes; it presumes a knowledge of the primitive, a sense of the minimally human, a sense of what is essential to being human."

A sense of what is "minimally human" or essentially human is among the most important values being lost in contemporary mass society. We cannot even say whether or not this loss has already reached a point of no return, but a reasoned reaffirmation of primitive and archaic lifeways and truths has the potential of aiding the "people without history" (as Eric Wolfe called western civilization's victims) to find their way, regain their stolen inheritance, and thus lay the foundations for an authentically human present (and presence). Such an impulse is both conservative and deeply radical, as Diamond argues, representing as it does "a form of neo-primitivist striving, proclaiming the sacredness of life, communal forms of society, the esthetic dimension of human nature, the continuity with nature at large and culture as ritual." Thus a redefined idea of "progress" would become more like the notion in aboriginal tribal societies, "a metaphor for spiritual transformation," and thus also "in part, a primitive return; a reformulation of old impulses in new situations and social structures." Let us also add, a process of healing.

The social and historical critique of empire, state, megamachine, monoculture, and the ideology of progress—"the basic apology for imperialism," as Diamond calls it, no longer a religion or a mere dogma but a compulsion—requires theoretical insight and an attentiveness to fundamental human intuitions.<sup>21</sup> But even indigenous peoples with a living memory of primal lifeways cannot any longer avoid negotiating much of the same terrain detribalized peoples face. A movement which attempts to reduce primitive insights into an ideology or strategy risks becoming a caricature of its own best instincts. Better to put our collective shoulder to the wheel we face, not chase phantoms. As Lévi-Strauss writes in *Tristes Tropiques*, "The sources of strength on which our remote ancestors drew are present also in ourselves," and he adds, quoting Rousseau: "The golden age which blind superstition situated behind or ahead of us is in us."<sup>22</sup>

An authentic green movement should

have room for anarchists, feminists, social and deep ecologists, anarcho-primitivists, left communists and eco-socialists, mystics and rationalists and many others, as long as they can keep in mind their common humanity and their common interests, and learn to act on them.

March-April 1997

#### Endnotes

1. See my *How Deep Is Deep Ecology? With an Essay-Review on Woman's Freedom*, written under the pseudonym George Bradford (Ojai: Times Change Press, 1989).

2. See E. B. Maple, "Ideology as Material Force: Earth First! and the Problem of Language," Spring 1988 FE; E.B. Maple, "Edward Abbey: We Rest Our Case," Summer 1988 FE; and George Bradford, "Cheerleaders for the Plague," Spring 1989 FE.

3. Gebbels cited in Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (1965; New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. x.

4. See *Industrial Society and Its Future: The Unabomber's Manifesto* (Cambridge: Green Anarchist Books, no date). The unnamed editor of *Green Anarchist* distances the group from the Unabomber's manifesto for "its reductionism and machismo," but it would be hard to find a more reductionist and macho treatment of the issue. The editor applauds the bombings and jeers at people maimed and killed, comments that the Unabomber "made good with the deed sixteen times in as many years," and congratulates the bomber "in his new career as ecoteur." There is no reflection on the ramifications of FC's agreement to stop killing people if the manifesto is published.

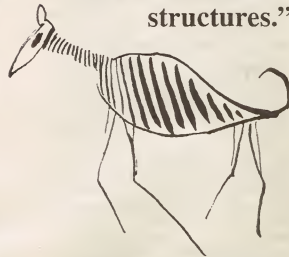
5. See in particular "Catching Fish in Chaotic Waters," in the Winter 1995 FE; also "Return of the Son of Deep Ecology: The Ethics of Permanent Crisis and the Permanent Crisis in Ethics," and "The Question of Agriculture (written under the pseudonym George Bradford), in the Spring 1989 FE.

6. Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive* (1974; New Brunswick and London: Transaction Books, 1981), p. 207, quoted in "Renew the Earthly Paradise," Winter/Spring 1986 *Fifth Estate*. Diamond's book is one of the most important and far-reaching recent attempts to develop a comprehensive critique of civilization, a reasoned primitivism.

7. Fredy Perlman, *Against His-story, Against Leviathan!* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1983); *The Strait: Book of Obenabi, His Songs* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1988). For Fredy's comment, "The only -ist name I respond to is 'cellist,'" see Lorraine Perlman, *Having Little, Being Much: A Chronicle of Fredy Perlman's Fifty Years* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1989), p. 98.

8. For some detailed discussion of the differences, see Langdon Winner's *Autonomous Technology: Techniques-out-of-Control as a Theme in Political Thought* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1977), and Neil Postman's *Technology: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Knopf, 1992). While not analyzing differences between tools and technology, Diamond still provides something like a neo-primitivist critique of technology in his observation that "science and technology, relieved and divorced from the human context and from social application, are no more than mechanical fetishes. The belief in the progress of an abstract science or technology is a peculiarly Western fallacy [which] . . . is related to the irrational production of commodities, over which ordinary people have no control, but which they are conditioned to consume. In the joint perspective of the worker and the consumer, the machines take on a life of their own—after all, they have not invented them, and have no voice in their use or replication. The imperious ring of the telephone, for example, interrupts all other activities. Its trivial, dissociated and obsessive use reflects both the alienating character of the society that prizes it so highly, and the transnational corporations that profit from it. Thus the telephone as ori-

**A redefined idea of "progress" would become more like the notion in aboriginal tribal societies, "a metaphor for spiritual transformation," writes Stanley Diamond, and thus also "in part, a primitive return; a reformulation of old impulses in new situations and social structures."**



narly used becomes a sign, not of communication, but of the lack of communication, and of the consequent compelling desire to relate to others, but to relate at a distance—and in the mode of a frustrated orality. The telephone is not an abstractly or inherently 'rational' instrument, but an integrated aspect of the repressive culture of monopoly capitalism. In our society, the machine becomes the mediator, and finally the locus of dissociated personal impulses." He adds in a note, "Monopoly capitalism seeks to overcome its contradictions by producing goods and services that absorb and displace attention from the isolation and frustration that its form of society generates; these objects and services then become necessary, a sign of progress, a proof of prestige for those who 'own' them, a symptom of class collaboration, and a way of holding people at large, who have no other alternatives, to ransom. They are, in other words, additions." (Diamond, *ibid.*, pp. 43-4)

9. John Zerzan, for example, who is listed as one of the primitivist luminaries by Moore and the GAS, thinks language and symbolization, which are rooted genetically and physiologically in the human species, reflect this repressive "totality." See his *Elements of Refusal* (Seattle: Left Bank Books, 1988) and *Future Primitive and Other Essays* (New York: Autonomedia/Anarchy, 1994). Seeing culture itself as the enemy, such a view leaves little if any solid ground on which to resist repressive civilization, or to cultivate a liberatory society.

10. See *Industrial Society and Its Future: The Unabomber's Manifesto*, paragraphs 166 and 182. The "two main tasks," says the text in crudely instrumental language, "are to promote social stress and instability in industrial society and to develop and propagate an ideology that opposes technology and the industrial system." (paragraph 181) One would think that radical green anarchists, fully aware of the social chaos caused by industrialism itself and a desire for a genuine social coherence, and wary as they must be of ideology itself, having learned its dangers from situationist and ultra-left theory, would have seen through such simplistic and manipulative notions. To each one his chimera, as Baudelaire once quipped.



11. Luther Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (1933; Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), p. 248. On civilization, Luther Standing Bear had this to say: "True, the white man brought great change. But the varied fruits of his civilization, though highly colored and inviting, are sickening and deadening. And if it be the part of civilization to maim, rob and thwart, then what is progress?"

"I am going to venture that the man who sat on the ground in his tipi meditating on life and its meaning, accepting the kinship of all creatures, and acknowledging unity with the universe of things was infusing into his being the true essence of civilization. And when native man left off this form of development, his humanization was retarded in growth. . . . And true civilization lies in the dominance of self and not in the dominance of other men. . . . Regarding the 'civilization' that has been thrust upon me since the days of reservation, it has not added one whit to my sense of justice; to my reverence for the rights of life; to my love for truth, honesty and generosity; nor to my faith in Wakan Tanka—God of the Lakotas. For after all the great religions have been preached and expounded, or have been revealed by brilliant scholars, or have been written in books and embellished in fine language with finer covers, man—all man—is still confronted with the Great Mystery." (pp. 248-53) Standing Bear was clear-headed enough to protest civilization without tying himself up in knots the way some of our more literal-minded primitivists do today. This pragmatic attitude about language made him a distant ally of Mohandas Gandhi, who when asked his opinion of western civilization had the presence of mind to choose his words carefully, replying, "It would be a good idea."

For related reasons I find a recent article's attitude about civilization or lack of it to be refreshing. Writes Peter Porcupine in a fascinating article on the brief relationship between plotters in Leeds and a squatter who took over one person's greenhouse, "Homage to Civility" (in *Here & Now*, issue 6/17): "It's unfortunate that the bourgeois triumphalists of the eighteenth century cornered the word 'civilization' to define their singularly uncivilized and ruthless social arrangements. By rubbishing the society of Native Americans, Scottish Highlanders or English commoners the idea of civilization became synonymous with capitalist society with its strong state, hierarchical social relations and production for profit, consumption for emulation. Other social arrangements were simply designated as barbaric despite the civility with which these other arrangements conducted themselves. There is a temptation to use the word 'community' to provide a positive term for human relationships which operate without coercion or manipulation, but there is a danger that it be used as an exclusive term defined by who is *in*, and who is *out*. . . . If community means just a democratic panopticon with everyone snooping on everyone else, then give me civility, an idea that respects the community without destroying the individual." One might suggest that Porcupine is also quibbling a bit over words, but the difference is that he is engaging real practical problems in and beyond an actual community, and his essay raises a series of questions in an undogmatic way. He does not become enslaved to a jargon. (*Here & Now* is available c/o Transmission Gallery, 26 King Street, Glasgow G1 5OP, Scotland.)

12. It's an error—or perhaps a tactic—made repeatedly by Murray Bookchin. He writes in a typically poisonous and self-serving essay attacking deep ecologists, neo-luddites and neo-primitivists in the ecology movement, "At the risk of being provocative, albeit not accusatory, I must point out that nature mysticism permeated the thinking and avowals of the most murderous of the Nazi leaders. . . . Biocentrism appears in several pages of [Hitler's] *Mein Kampf*. . . ." This passage, from Bookchin's *Which Way for the Ecology Movement?* (Edinburgh and San Francisco: AK Press, 1994, p. 8), is cited approvingly by the Neolists in *Green Apocalypse*. Of course, saying



Graphic: M. Spira

## "Under Stalinism, official art and propaganda painted wild nature as an enemy of the working class . . . Every good Marxist was expected to support the struggle of 'collectively organized reason against the elemental forces of nature.'"

you're not being accusatory doesn't necessarily mean you aren't. At any rate, the result is the same: as when Bookchin publicly denounces deep ecology as an ecofascist "cesspool" and the *Fifth Estate* critical luddism as part of a sinister "neo-Heideggerian reaction" with ecofascist implications. If Nazis stumbled on ideas resembling green and deep ecological insights in any way, that is supposedly enough to discredit these insights—a logic which does not serve social ecology well, either, as my essay demonstrates below.

13. For a list of such groups, see Carl Deal, *The Greenpeace Guide to Anti-Environmental Organizations* (Berkeley: Odonian Press, 1993) \$5 from Box 7776, Berkeley CA 94707.

14. Mark Shapiro, "Browns and Greens: Europe's New Eco-Fascists," *The Amicus Journal*, Winter 1992.

15. In his *A View to Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1993), Matt Cartmill writes, "Under Stalinism, official art and propaganda painted wild nature as an enemy of the working class, calling on all Soviet citizens to help tame the wilderness and make it serve the needs of the proletariat. Novels, paintings, and posters showed heroic Soviet workers damming rivers, draining marshes, felling forests, and dotting the tundra with factories. Every good Marxist was expected to support the struggle of 'collectively organized reason against the elemental forces of nature.' 'Praise of nature,' declared Maxim Gorky, 'is praise of a despot.'" (p. 218-19)

16. See his *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1971) pp. 117-19. Ironically, in her recent book *Anarchism: Left, Right and Green* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1994), German anarcho-syndicalist Ulrike Heider points to what she considers potentially fascist aspects of Bookchin's work—for example, references to "the blood that flows between the community and nature" (in *The Ecology of Freedom*), and other passages that, according to Heider, "especially in their German translation, have a frighteningly familiar ring." Bookchin's "theoretical proximity to the ideology of the *Volksgemeinschaft* cannot be overlooked." (pp. 79, 64) For more on Bookchin's fascism-mongering, see my *Beyond Bookchin: Preface to a Future Social Ecology* (Detroit and New York: Black & Red/Autonomedia, 1996), pp. 220-1. Since fascism colonizes anxieties rooted in real concerns, and (as Bookchin rightfully argues in *The Rise of Ur-*

*banization and the Decline of Citizenship* [San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1987, pp. 244-5]), Nazism exploits only to abandon "the utopian content of . . . popular yearning for a sense of place and community," anyone can be accused of fascism for voicing such anxieties, concerns and utopian yearnings.

17. Bahro's books, despite irregularities, are still valuable. See *Socialism and Survival* (London: Heretic Books, 1982), *From Red to Green* (London: Verso, 1984) and *Building the Green Movement* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1986). See also his essay, "Who Can Stop the Apocalypse?" in the Spring 1991 FE.

18. Janet Biehl and Murray Bookchin themselves have written that simply because fascists have exploited ecology and people's genuine alienation "does not, of course, make attention to these issues fascist." They rightly recommend that ecological theorists and activists should "exercise extreme wariness as to how they use these ideas and the context in which they are placed," and they point to racist anti-immigration propaganda couched in ecological terms as an example of their misuse. The point, and the example, are well-taken. But one needn't be too terribly wary to notice a discrepancy between, on the one hand, a crude, inhuman, racist anti-immigration politics masked by scientific-ecological rationalizations, that tempts people to surrender the minimum ethical integrity, and, on the other hand, profound and poetic sensibilities like eco-mysticism, a biocentric ethic, and deep ecological expressions of the unity of life. Unfortunately, Bookchin and some of his associates have repeatedly slammed any and all manifestations of the latter as automatically "misanthropic" and fascist, thus undermining what good they might have done in raising the question of a political context. See "Ecofascism: Neither Left nor 'Up Front' but Far Right," in *Green Perspectives*, Number 27, August 1992. Max Cafard's "Bookchin Agonistes" (Summer 1997 FE) a review of Bookchin's latest book (*Re-enchanting Humanity: A defense of the human spirit against anti-humanism, misanthropy, mysticism and primitivism*, 1995), gives a damning picture of the absurd excesses Bookchin commits in attacking and vilifying as proto-fascist anyone he disapproves of.

19. Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1970); Daniel Guérin, *Fascism and Big Business* (1939; New York: Monad Press, 1973). Guérin describes socialism as "manifestly inferior" to

fascism in winning converts, mainly for being "less a religion than a scientific conception. Therefore it appeals more to intelligence and reason than to the senses and the imagination." Given the irrational aspects of stalinism and other leftist movements, with their demonology of enemy factions, worship of leaders, historical messianism and technocracy, Guérin's distinction is less than entirely credible. Moreover, he can only produce a naïvely instrumental recommendation for future resistance to fascism: "Doubtless, [the left's] propaganda methods need to be rejuvenated and modernized," he says. "Socialism should place itself more within the reach of the masses, and speak to them in clear and direct language that they will understand." (pp. 73-4) While Guérin's lack of creative response to this question is understandable for his time, our failure to unite reason and spirit will be less excusable.

Both Guérin and Reich (whom Joel Kovel has called "the most spiritual of psychoanalysts"), refer to the "mystical contagion" of fascism, but they identify this with statism, traditional religion, patriarchal values and nationalist-racist ideology. "Every form of mysticism is reactionary," writes Reich, "and the reactionary man is mystical." (p. 24) Yet he argues for a kind of organicism, and attacks both the church and "reactionary science" (p. 128), arguing that "machine civilization" has turned humanity, "fundamentally an animal," into a robot. "In the construction of the machine, man followed the laws of mechanics and lifeless energy," he says, and adds emphatically, "*The mechanistic view of life is a copy of mechanistic civilization.*" Their animal nature suppressed, human beings experience it in a distorted, supernatural or otherworldly way. (pp. 334-5, 344) Of course, Reich's work suffers from mechanistic reductionism and a lack of nuance concerning the spectrum of experiences and ideas he categorizes as mystical. Reich's notion that "Consciousness is only a small part of the psychic life" (p. 26), like Freud's, reflects a mixture of respect for the non-rational and a narrow rationalist approach to it. Whatever his failings, nevertheless, he attempted to explore the underlying characterological sources of fascist hysteria in order to understand "what prevents the economic situation from coinciding with the psychic structure of the masses" (p. 14), a problem which remains unresolved today, but which cannot be fully resolved by a narrow atheistic rationalism or Reichian therapeutic-medical ideology. For Kovel's remark on Reich, see his *History and Spirit: An Inquiry into the Philosophy of Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), p. 157.

20. As Alexander Cockburn observes in an essay discussing, among other related themes, the Nazis' fascination with animal cruelty, vegetarianism, anti-vivisection, etc., "Animal-rights advocates and vegetarians often fidget under jeers that it was Nazis who banned vivisection. In fact vivisection continued during the Third Reich. The British journal *The Lancet* commented on the Nazis' animal experimentation laws of 1933 that 'it will be seen from the text of these regulations that those restrictions imposed [in Germany] follow rather closely those enforced in [England].' The moral is not that there is something inherently Nazi-like in campaigning against vivisection or deploring the eating of animal meat or reviling the cruelties of the feedlot and the abattoir. The moral is that ideologies of nature imbued with corrupt race theory and a degraded romanticism can lead people up the wrong path, one whose terminus was an abattoir for 'unhealthy' humans, constructed as a reverse image of the death camp for (supposedly) healthy animals to be consumed by humans. For the Nazis their death camps were, in a way, romanticism's revenge for the abattoirs and the hog-squeal of the universe [an allusion to Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*] echoing from the Union Stockyards in Chicago." See "A Short, Meat-Oriented History of the World. From Eden to the Mattolie," in *New Left Review*, Number 215 (January-February 1996).

See Swamp Fever next page



For 22 years the doors of justice have been closed to Leonard Peltier. Now, the door may be opening a crack. A few months ago AIM activist Dennis Banks announced that Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, had agreed to hold oversight hearings into the events leading to Peltier's arrest and conviction. Wounded Knee, the COINTELPRO programs against AIM, Peltier's illegal extradition from Canada, and the many irregularities in his trial will be among the issues brought to light.

The Northwest Leonard Peltier Support

Network has announced an International Indigenous Peoples' Day March on the U.S./Canadian Border for Justice for Leonard Peltier and the First Nations to take place on October 10-12, 1997. Events include a Rally for Justice at Olympia, the state capital, a caravan to the border, a "Run for Justice" and a mass meeting in Bellingham, Washington. The organizers need money and help. Contact them at POB

5464, Tacoma WA 98415-0464, tel. 253-383-9108.

Here in Detroit, through the efforts of persistent Peltier supporter Mick Vranich and others, the annual Peltier benefit was held at the Cass Cafe in March to raise funds for Peltier and inform the local community of his situation. Emceed by storyteller and former FE staffer and White Panther political pris-

oner Pun Plamondon, the event featured readings from poets Alise Alousi, Mark Grafe, Chris Monhollen, Dennis Teichman, Chris Tysh, José L. Garza and FE staffer David Watson.

A literature and information table was supplied by Kevin Kamps and friends from the World Tree Peace Center (POB 50814, Kalamazoo MI 49005). Mick's musical/poetry ensemble, with musicians John Bardy, The Blackman, Jim Johnson, Akulahi and Eric Walworth accompanying his poetry, ended the evening with a powerful performance. The poems here were among those read for Peltier.

# Poetry for Peltier

## shanghai

(from *Continuity Girl*)

broadened to include funeral piers  
which is to say not the slit already suspect  
that opens in the paddy fields but the camp

itself, unrelated to forgetting from soldier  
to prisoner passing his hands from truckfloor  
to water without even a hint of what must be

told one day: the body that burns in advance  
jams, at the skin, the shortwave crackle of these events

that it seek place on the rolled up scroll  
as marker or history depends on the economy  
of knowing, Slack motor across the compound.

Gangs, sentries and flies like a camouflage  
matinée cut up before the squatting crowd  
framed and separate from the letters of war

by a running fence, its barbed meaning  
not yet trenchant nor plain

Chris Tysh

## Butterfly Effect

"May your feet imitate heaven." —Theodore Roethke

Not flailing  
but dancing close in,  
the orrery of the limbs  
whispering  
what the body wants.  
Energy most fierce  
inside the thin ribbon  
of restraint,  
movements small as seeds  
or butterfly flap  
igniting hurricanes.  
The spine supple as a mast  
at full sail  
stretching from tap-root  
to sky,  
birds singing in the spars.

The hands of my beloved  
two whips of cloud.

David Watson

## Disorderly Conduct

(waiting for the Woodward bus because you  
took all my money, and the car keys, Detroit,  
Jan. 21, 1997)

Dazed and confused, tequila blues,  
I tighten my belt a notch  
because you said so, sentenced  
to riding the pinche\* D.O.T. bus  
in winterized, pulverized 1997.

Chasing this pinche puppy tail life around,  
makes a person want to say  
pinche all the time 'cause  
you said so made it all come true.  
Ambushed by Godzilla and Rodan imposters,  
your pinche friends not mine.

One of these glorious, wondrous pinche dias  
I am going to win la pinche  
loteria, the million dollar lottery,  
y despues I can afford without regrets  
my own pinche book of poems  
with only the word pinche in it;

repeated time and again  
because you deemed it so,  
flowing from the pinche tongue,  
the pen, the pinche broken vida/heart  
you so expertly, surgically removed  
with your dull knife/knife of secret revenge.  
Thankyou so pinche much.

\*pinche = damned, forsaken

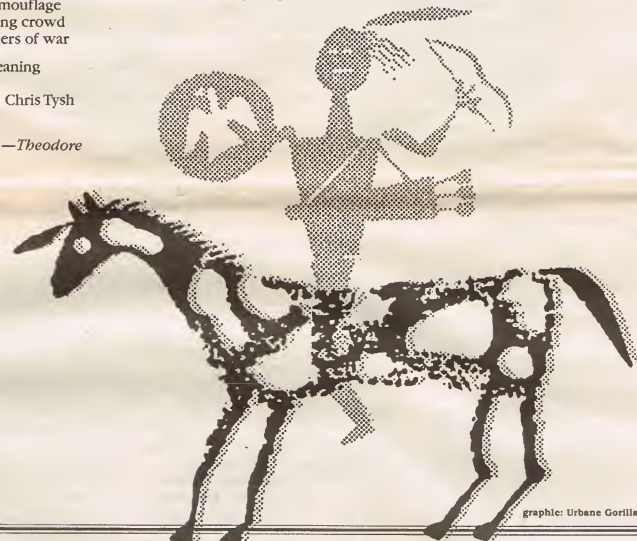
José L. Garza

## Stones

Wind-spewn acres  
and a monstrous sun cradle vapors  
of Indian ghosts dying over again  
A woman stands weeping  
her flesh obedient  
her hunger a dialogue  
her language is time  
her cries extend the sea  
Slender and golden  
the moon marks a promise  
the shadow haunts itself

I speak to you of madness  
I speak to you of a violent stare  
taking eyes to another form  
I speak to you in a soft voice  
with thickness of emotion  
and the lightness of a body  
walking from the night  
the day is tangled in body salt  
the sun resides in the wait  
What burns inside you is melted  
what is taken with you is yours

Christine Monhollen 3/97



graphite: Urbane Gortila

## Swamp Fever

continued from previous page

21. Jeffrey Herf, "Belated Pessimism: Technology and Twentieth Century German Conservative Intellectuals," in *Technology, Pessimism, and Modernism*, edited by Yaron Ezrahi et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), pp. 115-36. See also Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1984). I thank Allen Antliff for pointing out Herf's work to me.

22. Guerin, *ibid.*, pp. 79, 98, 53. Guerin speaks of other forms of fascist "mysticism," including the cult of youth and the cult of the dead and fallen heroes. But these cults can also be found in working class leftist and anarchist movements, too, as anyone who sees the newsreel of Durruti's funeral will notice. The cult of the dead probably goes back to the neanderthals, after all! Even the pseudo-classic

and art deco aesthetic in fascist art can also be discerned in socialist and anarchist posters.

23. For example, the basic themes of the Italian Futurists, many of whom were won over to Mussolini, were established by the movement's leader Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in *The Futurist Manifesto*. Jane Rye summarizes them as "the exaltation of speed, youth and action; of violence and conflict; rebellion against the past and disgust with the stagnation of Italian culture; a passionate enthusiasm for the beauties of the industrial age." See Rye's *Futurism* (New York and London: Dutton, 1972), p. 11.

24. Kovel, *ibid.*, pp. 72-5, 83, 8, 69-70. He adds that a spirituality perspective "does not deny any of the findings of science . . . It simply says that these findings, the 'nonspiritual' spirit of things spiritual, if you will, are a backdrop to the encounter with nonbeing which is the 'spirit of spirituality' itself."

25. Murray Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* (Edinburgh and San Francisco: AK Press,

1995).

26. The undated fall double issue of the NCLC journal, *The Campaigner*, was probably published in 1972. On the U.S. Labor Party, see "Bozos on Parade: The Frenzied Case of Lyn Marcus," by Robert Solomon, in *File-Back: A Journal of Cheap Shots* (Detroit: February 1976); NCLC: *Brownshirts of the Seventies* (Terrorist Information Project/Counterspy), and "The Strange Odyssey of Lyndon LaRouche," by Frank Donner and Randall Rothenberg, in *The Nation*, August 16-23, 1980.

27. An early essay on such parallels, John de Graaf's "The Dangers of Counterculture," was published in the March-April 1976 *North Country Anvil* and later revised and reprinted in the Fall 1977 *CoEvolution Quarterly* under the title, "The Wandervogel." Later, De Graaf reviewed his discussion in an article for the Winter 1980 Chicago newspaper *Heartland* in an essay, "From Flower Power to Fascism." De Graaf's view, it should be noted, was not that the essentially pacifist and internationalist German counter-culture was fascist, but that the

green counter-culture alone was incapable of stopping fascism. A left liberal himself, De Graaf argued that a "convergence of counter-culture and left political tendencies" was necessary, and saw signs of hope in the ecology and anti-nuclear movements of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

28. Robert A. Pois, *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), pp. 34-63.

29. Langdon Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 137.

30. See John Moore's *Anarchy & Ecstasy: Visions of Halcyon Days* (London: Aporia Press, 1988), available from FE Books. For the Nietzsche citation, see *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Walter Kaufman (1954; New York: Viking/Penguin, 1978), p. 92.27.

31. Diamond, *ibid.*, pp. 203, 119, 356, 40, 48.

32. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (1955; New York: Atheneum, 1971), p. 392.



## Letter from Pumpkin Hollow The Long Road Home

by Sunfrog

**P**UMPKIN HOLLOW, Tenn.—I'm trying to pick this narrative up off the gravel road, gyrating back into the woods. This odyssey of drift must stop somewhere; that somewhere is here. Perhaps my nomadic motion can continue in psychic space as my body plants itself firmly on the ground, my ground, our ground. I previously chose to be homeless, a vagabond, a hobo, roaming, raving and misbehaving.

Now, I ask for land, a place to be into the next millennium, until the next generation, perhaps until I die. I pray to Pumpkin Hollow, "Give me back my voice," as I hold my daughter tight, watching the sun set behind the glistening horizon from my own private ridgetop meadow. We watch the cows and Ruby informs me which ones are happy and smiling, and which ones are sad.

All the cows look rather pathetic to me with their plastic, numbered tags piercing their ears. Soon the cattle will be gone as the former owner takes them to pasture elsewhere. The large fecal cow-pies will join the soil and this land will be ours to live on. Our souls will join the land in an experimental dance towards survival.

Some days I'm not exactly certain how or why I ended up here in the rolling hills and hollers of middle Tennessee, but I have arrived, ready to plant pink toes in the earth like fibrous roots to the divine. I knew I wanted to be in Tennessee one cold dark night last March when we drove north from Florida into the blistering winds of a winter which would not leave, singing along with the tape deck as we crossed the state line. "Tennessee, Tennessee, there ain't no place I'd rather be. Baby won't you carry me, back to Tennessee."

Upon arriving at our new home at Short Mountain Sanctuary, I took a crash course in chopping wood and starting a fire from paper and twigs in the hearth of the wood stove. We lived in a small room in the building known as the Bee Complex. Ruby renamed it the Honey House because the rain barrels reminded her of Winnie the Pooh. During the bacchanalian revelry of the Beltane gathering, it was a den of iniquity christened the House of Salacious.

We were on a mission. We were going to buy land, "paradise for the price of collard greens," as our friend Julian so eloquently phrased it. We were going to found a community for a new tribe of parents and children. We did not know how hard it was going to be. We did not anticipate all the self-doubt and questioning of our motives. Yet in the end, we did not know how easy it was going to be.

All our anarchist pagan, punk, hippie, friends everywhere who talk about getting land, all prattle about the place they feel called to be. Popular epicenters include the Pacific northwest and the mountains around Asheville, North Carolina. We too must admit to answering some ineffable voice within. We were drawn to the magical enclaves of queer community at Ida and Short Mountain and to Lisa's parents, sister, brother-in-law and nephew in Nashville.

A recurring fear raised by urban radicals yet to make the leap to living on the land concerns "dropping out" and losing our connections to "revolutionary movements and activism." Whether these ideas

are raised as warning or critique, they echo similar verbal attacks waged by the militants of the late sixties and early seventies towards their softer peers spiraling into mysticism as they moved to places like the Farm in Summertown, Tennessee.

Others tried to engineer utopia with egalitarian social theory at places like Twin Oaks in Virginia. Both those communities—and hundreds of other less well-known ones—still thrive today as a com-

### We need warriors & foragers, barricades & barn raisings.

elling witness to the creation of a genuine alternative society. The secret societies and post-hillbilly havens of rural retreat, where wannabe Thoreaus read the Mother Earth News and the Real Goods catalog while sitting on the composting crapper, do not necessarily undermine the revolutionary project of urban activists simply because we need both strategies of fight and flight if we are going to survive. We need warriors and foragers, barricades and barn-raisings.

In reality, I am not that different or detached from my cuffed comrades. Even after several months of training in the butcher arts of farm life, from milking goats to wielding a chainsaw, I feel more compelled to sit at the computer and write treatises like this than to plant a garden or pour the foundation of a new house. Nearly a decade of shouting anthems from the polluted mouth of the Motor City, I was an alien pioneer in the ghetto streets then, just as I may appear foreign to the locals of these hills today.

Like many of my contemporaries, I migrated from suburbia to the inner city, and now from the city to the country. At 29, I'm not as pissed off and angry as I was at 21, but the seething indictment of industrial-capitalist civilization which I cultivated as a staff member of Detroit's Fifth Estate newspaper remains central to my motivation. I invoke the principles of liberated desire, mutual aid and voluntary cooperation in starting a collective farm—the same ideals which spawned soup kitchens, mud people parades, performances and demonstrations during my Detroit years.

I recognize some of the basic contradictions contained within my rustic exodus. For many years in the Motor City, of all places, I avoided automobiles, rode my bike incessantly and organized "Kill the Car" protests at General Motors world headquarters. After moving to the country, I depend on cars more than ever for frequent commutes to Nashville where I earn money and visit family. In buying land, we must also strive to supersede the problematic paradigm of private ownership—through collectivization, through communalism, and possibly through the model of the community land trust. And to pull that off, we need a lawyer and a legal status. We may become a corporation.

Many activists today want to update the Catholic Worker model of forming a rural collective farm directly connected to an urban locus of political resistance, which explains why some people desire settling in close proximity to a vibrant city milieu. To the best of my knowledge, few, if any, anti-authoritarian collectives have achieved this goal, perhaps because rural land near cities is so damn expensive and suburbanized. We're remote, yet close to a cultural center—Nash Vegas, a fundamentalist vaudeville circus of nauseating southern niceness which wants to loosen up enough to be as hip as Atlanta or Memphis.

Somewhere between March and December, we met roadblocks and land mines. We had frustrating, failed attempts to join other communities. The real estate ads always asked too much money for too little land. We explored the possibilities of auctions and foreclosures and kept our ears to the ground for the word about cheap rental properties. Every time it seemed we had gone as low as we could go, another setback slapped us in the face.

After looking at one particularly beautiful but inaccessible piece of real estate, a hostile neighbor chased us away saying, "We don't want any mother fuckin' faggots running around back here." In another land deal, the seller went back on his word and his handshake with us and sold to a timber family which will log the land. I reached several points where I was ready to leave Tennessee and settle for anything. I mean anything, just so we could have a home.

We had looked at Pumpkin Hollow six months earlier and Lisa had fallen in love with it. It was too expensive for us, but we combined energies, dreams and money with another family, and it was ours in a matter of days in an almost an effortless transaction. We know we are retracing

many steps blazed by other disaffected light-skinned pioneers, past and present. We are reading and re-reading the bibles of radical rural retreats.

I am pledging we will not become apolitical. The pressures and responsibilities of land ownership (truly, stewardship of something we can never own) will not dampen the fire of our libertarian spirits. We are already members of an extended family and network of communarians and back-to-the-land-types in this area. And, this network continues to grow. Our homestead is only one of four large farms purchased by friends and family in this immediate region this year.

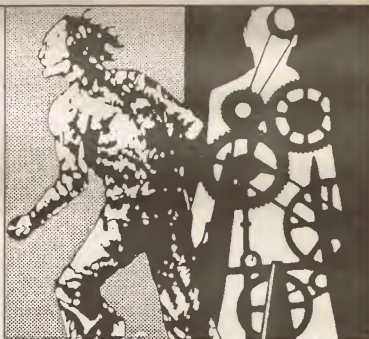
It is just a beginning. We are not even on the land yet and I am looking for sweeping conclusions. I'm really just picking up gravel on the path that leads me home. I am dreaming of cold mornings splitting logs and sipping scalding coffee, huddling by the wood stove to keep warm, and hot nights dancing naked by the campfire.

Imagining Ruby coming back to this land when she is a woman with children of her own. Then she'll have her own dreams and I hope to still nurture my voice, to tell more stories to my grandchildren from the ridgetop meadow of Pumpkin Hollow where I want to build my house and live forever.

**FE Note:** FE staff member-in-exile, Sunfrog has settled in rural Tennessee after a year of travels in a camper van. Once an active participant in the Detroit radical scene, he continues to produce zines as well as organize festivals and gatherings in his area.

His travel zine, *Hobos & Homesteaders*, and his polysex zine, *HBS*, are available from him at the Jazz Family address, Sunfrog, Lisa and Ruby, 1467 Pumpkin Hollow Rd., Liberty TN 37095.

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# Ginsberg: "The Trees Are Our Allies"

Continued from page 10

which is minstrelsy . . . I think it's being used in the same way . . . Like, the bard used to be the cat who went around from valley to valley getting the news and rhyming it up and telling everybody. The bardic tradition is the ancient oral newspaper before they had moveable type and so, like now, song is a source of information and news, about which way the wind is blowing.

FE: What purpose do you think your poetry serves?

AG: I don't know anything. I just feel as if I'm getting up and bullshitting to myself. At least at this hour of the morning that's what it feels like.

FE: What did it feel like last night when you [read in Detroit]?

AG: Like one old lone man talking to himself, other people overhearing, and to the extent that his speech was accurate and honest, one man felt like anybody else, or everybody else. But it didn't have any social conclusions or propositions to it, finally. There's no system at the end. What'd we begin with, let's go back to there.

FE: All right, what place poetry has in connection with the movement in America today?

AG: Here's what I'm bridling about—what is happening socially now, which, here in Detroit, right now, is being called the movement—is a little wavelet on a larger awareness that's growing in people, which is a biological awareness rather than a political awareness . . . Another kind of politics is slowly emerging which is indistinguishable from biology or ecology . . . Ideological politics, ideological marxist politics has become completely bankrupted along with capitalism in the biological crisis that's overtaken the planet. There's a threat to the existence of the entire planet, so when you ask the question what place has poetry in the social revolution, I begin bridling. I begin cursing because it's like putting everybody's understanding back in the thirties, in a way, when everybody was arguing whether or not the poet should be responsible socially.

This is an argument that ultimately wound up whether or not the poet was responsible to the Central Committee of the Communist Party for a proper articulation of the needs and desires and logical ideology of the masses. And that, as Chairman Mao has repeatedly said, the poet must stand up and take criticism from the Communist Party because the Communist Party is the will of the people. Therefore, since the poet must be responsible to the will of the people he must be responsible logically to the Communist Party and therefore, if they tell him to fuck off, he's got to fuck off. In other words, the terminology of the question you asked, that same terminology seems dated and that's why I was being so creepy in my answer.

The creepiness of my answer did sneak in some reference to biology. I don't think the movement as it is known here is yet ecologically oriented and biologically

conscious or complete and, therefore, the movement is full of shit.

FE: The movement here in Detroit?

AG: Everywhere, the whole movement—in the United States and Cuba and Russia and China, everywhere. The whole revolutionary movement is not yet into the realization of the fact that man's material grasping is actually destroying other species and it's actually beginning to threaten the existence of the planet itself.

As Gary Snyder points out, the exploited masses are not just blacks and hippies and the Chinese, the exploited masses are the trees and the fish in the sea, those are the exploited masses, the rest of the sentient beings on the planet. I think we need things like Snyder's "Smokey the Bear Sutra," and a new thing called "The Declaration of Interdependence," which was just put out by a whole gang of ecology action people on the west coast that are sympathetic enough to include the whole planet and not just the human contingent.

FE: Why is it that the section of the movement that has ecology as its roots is based on the west coast?

AG: Because everybody here is so covered with machinery and smog that they have forgotten that nature even exists. Quite literally, here people have become so divorced from the bio-system of the planet, especially here in Detroit, the center of mechanization, that they literally have forgotten that they are part of a larger interdependent harmonic organic system. They've got mountains out there so you can always go out in the mountains and realize that mountains are bigger than cities; that the back country is much much faster than the places the humans have filled up.

FE: Well, what effect do you think ecology oriented poets like Gary Snyder and Diane di Prima are having on the people as far as changing these things goes?

AG: I don't like the phrase "the people." Who is the people, who is the people, who the fuck is the people? I keep bridling over this political terminology. Who is the people? What does that mean?

FE: Well, the people who are capable of changing things or setting the world straight, because the trees certainly can't do it by themselves.

AG: The trees are the only ones who are getting the world straight. They're the ones who are producing the oxygen we are consuming; the trees are like the oxygen factories of the atmosphere. The trees are

our biggest allies. If the enemy is the materialistic, consumer-oriented, predatory, acquisitive capitalistic, manufacturing society which is consuming all our natural resources at a suicidal rate, our natural allies in this battle for survival are the trees and the grass.

The ecology oriented people are articulating clearly what everybody, including the capitalists, is unconsciously realizing. But it is just too large and apocalyptic and horrible to realize into consciousness that we are in, perhaps, the death throes of the planet and that the planet may be finished unless we take some immediate measures, unless we're aware of the fact that we're a threat to the planet . . .

FE: Does the poet have any place in turning peoples' eyes to these facts?

AG: Well, not ordained by God, but it's just common sense. I guess that poets have always been running around in the woods and spouting out about nature so, yeah, sure, they'd be the first ones to be sensitive when nature gets shit all over. It is shit because it's just the waste product, thoroughly machine shit, the shit of robots, even brown colored, in a gaseous form, robot farts.

FE: Why is it that the state is constantly busting poets like John Sinclair, LeRoi Jones, you, and in some cases, even driving them to suicide as with d.a. Levy?

AG: Or Brodsky, Alexi Ginzburg, Esenin . . . or all the poets in China they fucked in the ass, too. I hate Mao Tse-Tung. His literary criticism is the worst of the new criticism that has escaped, worse than Alan Tate . . . Mainly they bust poets because I don't think poets are intimidated by authority. If they've reported their unconscious correctly, if they're measuring their unconscious accurately, then you are getting an unconditioned report on what you're actually thinking and feeling rather than a partial report on what you think you're supposed to feel and think as dictated by politicians of any side.

FE: What do you think of violence as a means for change? Is there a time when its use is necessary or acceptable?

AG: Once a question like that is posed, it then becomes unanswerable. That's like something Burroughs said the other day: "Once a problem is posed, it becomes insoluble." There's no answer, I mean I don't have an answer for that, all I know is that I get violently angry, but I know every time I do, I pay for it because I usually hit the wrong person. Like at the beginning of this interview I was violently angry, but I don't even know who I was being angry at,

## —from Wichita Vortex Sutra

I lift my voice aloud,  
make Mantra of American language  
now,

I here declare the end of the War!  
Let the States tremble,  
let the Nation weep,  
let Congress legislate its own delight  
let the President execute his  
own desire—

this Act done by my own voice,  
published to my own senses,  
blissfully received by my own form  
approved with pleasure by my  
sensations  
manifestations of my very thought  
accomplished in my own imagination  
all realms within my consciousness fulfilled  
60 miles from Wichita  
near El Dorado,

The Golden One,  
in chill earthly mist  
houseless brown farmland plains  
rolling heavenward  
one midwinter afternoon Sunday called  
the day of the Lord—  
Pure Spring Water gathered in one  
tower

where Florence is  
set on a hill  
stop for tea & gas

February 14, 1966

so I took it out on you. So, most violence I've seen has been bullshitting.

FE: Can you rationalize it as self-defense ever?

AG: I've never been in a situation where violent fisticuffs, guns, or self-defense was more effective than other means; there are always other means that were more effective, I've found. But it requires training in other means, just as self-defense requires training in karate. In Chicago, had they had classes in rhythmic behavior, mantra chanting and organized body movements, the first day of the [1968 Democratic Party] Convention would have sent a message much more sympathetic and interesting to the world at large through the public imagery than they did when they sent the snake dance karate message.

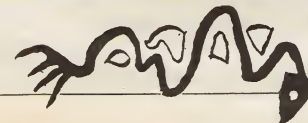
They would have averted violent conspiracy evidence in the trial and they would have trained people for something useful. The karate class in this case was neither used nor useful; it was just a lot of bullshitting. It was never put into use anyway; it was just a theatrical gesture.

The rationalization for it at the time was that it was absolutely practically necessary that they be trained precisely in that way, for physical combat contact. Well, it wasn't—it was just hysterical and the guys who were running it agreed later anyway. It would have been more effective in terms of street tactics had they spent a day teaching people mantras, because the mantras were used a little, at least, and the karate never was—so violence only leads to more violence, it's a big drag, egotistical, like with the police, but the violence is already set forth and so escalated in every direction and everybody is so insistent on having their own way that I suppose that it's going to take place . . .

FE: Where's it all going to stop?

AG: Burroughs says the planet's finished. As to whether or not it is. . . ?

**"The trees are our biggest allies. If the enemy is the materialistic, consumer-oriented, predatory, acquisitive capitalistic, manufacturing society which is consuming all our natural resources at a suicidal rate, our natural allies in this battle for survival are the trees and the grass."**







## News & Reviews

Several new books of interest have recently come our way. We only have space to mention them in this issue, but hope to review them in the near future.

A new edition of occasional FE contributor Richard Drinnon's *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating & Empire-Building* is once again available, in a new edition from the University of Oklahoma Press. We have recommended Drinnon's book for years; it is an inspired, encyclopedic counter-history of U.S. colonial-settler culture, connecting the massacres from colonial Massachusetts to My Lai, and the imperial rationales that justified them.

Like Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States*, Frederick W. Turner's *Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit of the Wilderness*, and a small handful of other titles, Drinnon's book is required reading for anyone wanting to understand the dialectic of conquest on this continent.

AK Press has just published Agustín Guillamón's *The Friends of Durruti Group: 1937-1939*, translated by Paul Sharkey. This very handsome addition includes plates showing the front pages of the group's newspaper *El Amigo del Pueblo*. It is available from AK Press, PO Box 40682, San Francisco CA 94140-0682 for \$9.95. Ask for their extensive catalog of anarchist titles.

Graham Purchase, whose fine essay, "Kropotkin's Metaphysics of Nature," appeared in the Late Summer 1991 FE (available for \$2 from the FE bookstore), has published a book on Kropotkin, *Evolution & Revolution: An Interpretation to the Life and Thought of Peter Kropotkin* (Jura Books). Chapters include "Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution" (the title of Kropotkin's most famous work), "Kropotkin's Theory of Communal Revolution," and the essay published in the FE. It is available from Jura Books, 110 Crystal Street, Petersham NSW 2049, Australia, though we don't seem to have any price for it.

Ken Knabb, translator and editor of the *Situationist International Anthology*, has published a three-part, 408-page omnibus collection, laying out his views on revolution in a section entitled "The Joy of Revolution"; adding his memoirs, "Confessions of a Mild-Mannered Enemy of the State"; and a third section in which he anthologizes all of his previous publications—flyers and essays and even the entire text of his book on Kenneth Rexroth.

We find plenty in here with which to disagree, but Knabb can be appealing, he is a gentle and generous memoirist, and his book makes an interesting read. It is available from the Bureau of Public Se-

Continued on page 29

# Fifth Estate Books



## Forget those L.L. Bean and Harry & David catalogs!

When you're picking out presents for the holidays, send revolutionary literature as gifts and help support independent publishers and booksellers. If you want a wider selection of anti-authoritarian titles, contact Left Bank Books, 92 Pike St., Seattle WA 98101; tel and fax: 206-622-0195; or AK Press, P.O. Box 40682, San Francisco CA 94140; tel: 415-864-0892.

—Cartoon by R. Cobb

### BEYOND GEOGRAPHY: THE WESTERN SPIRIT AGAINST THE WILDERNESS

by Frederick Turner

Traces the "spiritual history" that led up to the European domination and decimation of the Western hemisphere's native peoples who were as rich in mythic life as the new arrivals were barren. Turner follows the unconscious desire for the contentment they sensed in the primitives they destroyed.

Rutgers U. Press 329pp \$15

### THE REVOLUTION OF EVERYDAY LIFE

by Raoul Vaneigem

Written in 1963-65 and first published in France in 1967, Vaneigem's book complements Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* which appeared in the same year. As the main programmatic statements of the Situationist International, these two works played a larger part than any other publications in the gestation of the 1968 French May events.

Left Bank Books 216pp \$16

### SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE

by Guy Debord

Black & Red 221pp \$5

### A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

by Howard Zinn

"...engaging, informative, passionate and extremely well-written...the best critical survey of American history available." —FE Review

Harper & Row 614pp \$12

### FOUR ARGUMENTS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF TELEVISION

by Jerry Mander

Television doesn't just have "bad" content, but changes how we perceive the world. Experience is no longer direct, but mediated by T.V. through centralized and unified images. The result is a loss of the sensuous world and a passive, easily manipulated population.

Quill 371pp \$9

### This World We Must Leave and Other Essays

by Jacques Camatte

Camatte straightforwardly calls leftist political organizations and labor unions

"rackets." He depicts a voracious Capital endowed with anthropomorphic needs requiring the domestication of humans. The stand-off between Capital vs. The Earth gives a context for evaluating ecological devastation. Camatte helped us to definitively leave the Progress bandwagon.

Autonomedia 256pp \$9

### LIVING MY LIFE Vol I & II

by Emma Goldman

The turbulent autobiography of a woman at the center of the century's major events. Although her life intersected with the famous figures of the era, it is the day-to-day struggles for anarchy which make this account come alive. This is the original two-volume edition first published in 1931.

Dover 993pp (2 volumes) \$18

### HAVING LITTLE, BEING MUCH: A CHRONICLE OF FREDY PERLMAN'S FIFTY YEARS

by Lorraine Perlman

A remembrance of a friend, and the times and the Detroit community in which he lived. "Lorraine's direct and unadorned style lets Fredy's life speak for itself; one cannot help but see it as exemplary." —FE Review

Black & Red 155pp \$5

### THE FINAL EMPIRE: THE COLLAPSE OF CIVILIZATION

by W.M. H. Kotke

Kotke's target is civilized human society over the past 10,000 years. Facing the final empire, the emerging global corporate system and its last-gasp exponential curve toward ecological exhaustion, Kotke advocates planting seed communities, new human families based in Permaculture and healing, working together to recover the complex relations with nature and each other, lost in civilization's millennia of subjugating indigenous peoples.

Arrowpoint Press 396pp \$15

### T.A.Z.: TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONE

by Hakim Bey

This text is still in search of communities that would meaningfully debate as well as indulge its insights and vision. Ontological Anarchism, Poetic Terrorism, and the Temporary Autonomous Zone are the articles of belief for a new community which actualizes its will-to-power

as disappearance. Bey says to authoritarians and anti-authoritarians alike, that human liberation, beauty and adventure lie beyond the hypocrisies and banalities of our present.

Autonomedia 141pp \$7

### ECO-DEFENSE: A FIELD GUIDE TO MONKEYWRENCING

edited by

Dave Foreman and Bill Haywood

This new, revised and enlarged third edition contains everything the wilderness defender needs to know about how to disable, dismantle, and destroy the machinery, buildings and vehicles, etc. of those who are raping the earth for profit. Sabotage techniques are richly detailed with diagrams, first hand accounts and "fields notes."

Ned Ludd Books 311pp \$20

### THE LAST DAYS OF CHRIST THE VAMPIRE

by J.G. Eccarius

One of the most blasphemous books we have seen since the classics of sacrilege. The book jacket states: "His power grew over the ages. Enslaving minds and bodies through both religious hierarchies and direct telepathic control, Jesus Christ the Vampire promises people eternal life for the price of their minds." 8,000 copies sold!

111 Publishing 180pp \$10

### FREE WOMEN OF SPAIN: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women

by Martha Ackelsberg

Ackelsberg traces the efforts during the Spanish Revolution by *Mujeres Libres*, to create an independent organization of working class women that would empower them to take their place in the revolution and in the new society. She argues that their analysis of domination and subordination, and the centrality of notions of community, are equally important for contemporary feminists.

Indiana Univ. Press 256pp \$15

### THE GREAT FRENCH REVOLUTION: 1789-1793 VOL. 1&2

By Peter Kropotkin

Kropotkin sees the revolution as a continuous stream of popular action, beginning long before the revolution itself. In the clash between the Jacobins and their opponents—the Hebertists, Enrages, and Anarchists, Kropotkin draws out the origins of Marxism and Leninism within the Jacobins. Although the French Revolution was a popular, mass event, it was directed and disciplined by a minority of professional revolutionaries. Those who continue to exalt the organization of a post-revolutionary State fail to see that the interests followed were, in France, and everywhere else, exactly those of the bourgeoisie.

Elephant Editions 2 vol. 602pp \$15

For a complete list of available issues of the FE, send an SASE, or request it with your book order.

Fifth Estate Books is located at 4632 Second Avenue, just south of W. Forest, in Detroit, in the same space as the Fifth Estate Newspaper. Hours vary, so please call before coming by.

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# OBJECTIVITY & LIBERAL SCHOLARSHIP

by Noam Chomsky

Introduction by Peter Werbe

Taken from Chomsky's 1969 *American Power and the New Mandarins*, this thin volume exposed his colleagues' cooperation with the imperial slaughter in Southeast Asia. Written while the Vietnam war was raging, he also demonstrates that the same ideology distorts the work of scholars who analyzed earlier conflicts. His critique of historians of the Spanish Revolution and Civil War includes a stirring account of the anarchist participation which is either ignored or falsified by liberals and stalinists alike. The best short history of the Spanish anarchists' triumphs and defeats. **Black & Red 142pp \$6**

## TIMBER WARS

by Judi Bari

These are some of the essays that played a role in radicalizing a generation of ecology activists. Essays and interviews on Redwood Summer and the bombing which crippled Bari, on the split in Earth First!, on life in the timber mills, on mainstream environmentalist betrayals of the grassroots movement, on "the feminization of Earth First!", on monkeywrenching and the decision to renounce tree-spiking, and much more. Proceeds from sale of this book go to the Redwood Justice Fund to continue Judi's and Darryl Cherney's lawsuit against the FBI for complicity in the 1990 car bombing. **Common Courage Press, 344 pp. \$15**

## THE BOMB

by Frank Harris

Alister Crowley called this 1909 fictionalized account of the Haymarket bomb incident by the author of *My Life and Loves*, "the best novel I have ever read." It is written as a narrative from the uncaught anarchist who threw the explosive which killed the Chicago police attacking 8-hour day protesters and led to the state murder of the five Haymarket martyrs. It contains a right-wing introduction from a 1963 edition by John Dos Passos and an afterword by John Zerzan. **Feral House 213pp \$13**

## PEOPLE WITHOUT GOVERNMENT

An Anthropology of Anarchism

by Harold Barclay

"Ten thousand years ago everyone was an anarchist," writes Barclay in this engaging book. Barclay covers anarchy among hunter-gatherers, gardeners, herders, agriculturalists and even moderns. He has reservations about primal societies (we would probably disagree with some fundamentals in his description). Yet his "anarcho-cynicalist point of view"—that anarchy may never be attained, and thus "[t]he battle is forever"—is undogmatic, and his citations interesting and appealing. **Kahn & Averill \$12.95**

## BEYOND BOOKCHIN:

Preface for a Future Social Ecology

by David Watson

Besides providing a thorough critique of Murray Bookchin's narrow version of social ecology, this wide-ranging essay explores new paths of thinking about radical ecological politics. "A brilliant, carefully argued critique [which] will do much to restore social ecology's promise as a broad, liberatory vision."—John Clark. "Bookchin is the Elmer Fudd of North American anarchism, and Watson is the Bugs Bunny."—Hakim Bey. **Black & Red/Autonomedia 256pp. \$8.00**

## SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL

ANTHOLOGY

translated & edited by Ken Knabb

A compendium of writings by the influential Situationist International group. Included are texts preceding the group's formation, soundtracks from Guy Debord's avant-garde films, flyers dating from May 1968 and internal I.S. exchanges. **Bureau of Public Secrets 406pp. \$15**



—photo & caption: Jason Kirkpatrick

"I was hanging out on Carnaby street in London having a beer, when this red-laced punk gets flagged down by a Snapple U.K. film crew and for 50 pounds agrees to be in a commercial and sell capitalist tea to his mates. Shithead."

## NEWS & REVIEWS

Continued from page 28

crets, POB 1044, Berkeley CA 94701 for \$15 (checks payable to Ken Knabb).

**Dead Trees Earth First!** has printed the 1990 FE essay, "Stopping the Industrial Hydra: Revolution Against the Megamachine," which takes the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill as a starting point to explicate industrial capitalism and to pose a more comprehensive radical opposition to it.

What makes this reprint particularly useful is the addition of sections and comments from an activist at South Downs EF! in the UK. The additions are admirable, and bring more information to bear on the long-term effects of oil on affected birds, on the problem of regularly spilled motor oil and its highly polluting "recycled" use in space heaters in Britain, and other related issues.

There is a stunning essay as well, "Never Trust a Techno-Fix!", which lays bare the horrors of the modern car economy and its consequences. The issue with the original FE article can be obtained through our bookservice for \$2. There are other articles in that issue we'd like to get into people's hands, but the additions are so good in this pamphlet that if you have to choose between them, buy the EF! piece for 80 pence.

A revised version of the essay will be printed in David Watson's forthcoming collection, *Against the Megamachine*, but the EF! pamphlet will still be a valuable document in its own right. **Dead Trees EF!** has other publications and can be reached c/o South Downs EF!, Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton, E. Sussex BN1 6DA UK.

**Congratulations to Black Badger**, "the weasly zine of reviews and commentary," for a thoughtful and uncompromising inaugural issue. Articles include an editorial debunking the cop demand for more deadly weaponry based on their contention they are outgunned by crooks. According to the mag's figures, 80 percent of police fatalities result from police being killed with their own weapons and less than ten have died at the hands of criminals with assault weapons in the last decade.

A commentary on the *Tao Te Ching* by Tundra Wind, makes clear the distinction between the philosophy of taoism and religious taoism. The former is a fitting companion to both primitivism and anarchism as it rejects the complex for the simple, and authority for the self-guided.

A challenging article by a bisexual revolutionary asks "where are the anarchists

and autonomen in the queer community?" Also, anarchist prisoner Avi Nafial, who is about to be released, describes an Arizona prison lock-down and a companion piece by a member of his support group tells of a visit to the cruel place where he's spent the last 15 years.

There are numerous good zine and book reviews including one which takes on Murray Bookchin's blustering *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*, providing another nail in the coffin of Bookchinism. **Black Badger** wants submissions and subscriptions; sample copy from P.O. Box, Berkeley CA 94701.

**The FE** receives several manuscripts, magazines, journals, books, and small zines each day. Being understaffed, we simply cannot mention or even acknowledge receiving them all. It does all get looked at, and may sometimes be mentioned in the paper.

Material we receive is sometimes given away in our bookstore or goes to a reading and lending library and bookstore at the local anarchist space, the Trumbull Theater or their books for prisoners program, so it is being read. Some materials also find their way to the University of Michigan Labadie Library, which houses an enormous archive of radical and revolutionary literature and correspondence.

The possibility of mention/review may be more likely at *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* (C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia MO 65205-1446, single copies \$6, checks to C.A.L.).

Editor Jason McQuinn seems to have boundless energy; he's produced a recent issue of his journal and an equally handsome issue of *The Alternative Press Review*. People should send him their zines and check his publications for conscientious reviews of what he receives.

**The Meltzer Press** has announced publication of its first title, *Sentenced to Death under Franco*, by Juan Busquets Verges, translated from the Spanish by Paul Sharkey. Busquets Verges was a 21-year-old CNT activist who fought with anarchist rural guerrilla groups in Catalonia until he was arrested and tried in 1949, sentenced to death and then reprieved. He tells the story of his next twenty years in prison.

After being released in 1969 he describes his involvement in the Asociación de Presos Políticos del Franquismo en Francia (Association of Political Prisoners of Francoism in France). This spiral-bound book is available for £12.50 from P.O. Box 35, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 2UX, England.

# Grass-Roots Socialism: Almost Anarchism

by Beni

*Grass-Roots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895-1943*. James R. Green, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge & London, 1978), 450 pp.

Even though this is a regional work covering Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas—in many ways it could well be the best monograph ever written on the American socialist movement. Those four states in the Southwest were home to the greatest concentration of socialists in the U.S. in terms of socialist voters, socialist periodical subscribers, and socialist activists.

Most historians of American socialism have ignored the agrarian, rural southwest and have focused instead on the Socialist Party's (SP) top leaders and their urban supporters in the East and the Midwest. Green concentrates on the local and regional activists, the "forgotten men and women who made the movement such a strong indigenous expression of socialism," many of whom were active in nonelectoral movement causes and most of whom were not supported in any real way by the SP national leadership.

Green also focuses on American socialism as a movement and includes many nonparty socialist activists and organizations ignored by other authors or dismissed by them as populist, evangelical, anarchist, or utopian.

The breadth and depth of Green's scholarship and analytical interpretation are impressive, as are his abilities to digest and organize a tremendous amount of documented information, put it into a clear historical context, and present it in an interesting and highly readable fashion.

Green includes some valuable information on both J.A. Wayland and his *Appeal to Reason*, as well as on the Southwestern socialist periodical press.

Especially valuable to me is the information he includes on or related to Job Harriman and the Llano/Newllano and Nevada City colonies, both the general information and the new and exciting wealth of details on pre-Llano radicalism in Louisiana's Vernon Parish and DeRidder City, which was the center of the socialist-anarchist IWW/BTU struggles, and an SP stronghold almost up to the time the Llano colonists moved there from California.

Valuable too is the material on the anarchist Covington Hall, who appears throughout the book, as well as the information on the relationship between the SP and the Mexican revolutionary anarchist Flores Magonistas and the IWW and American anarchists in Texas.

There are only two real flaws in this book. Perhaps to avoid what he sees as the derogatory implications of the label, Green seems to purposely avoid using the word "anarchist," substituting the words syndicalist, semi-syndicalist, red socialist, or socialist militant instead. Second, there is no bibliography, which requires any scholarly reader to construct one from the extensive, but scattered footnotes.



# Glowing In The Gulf

Continued from page 1

tims of a massive government bio-chemical warfare experiment, even as they, in turn, were carrying out U.S. policy and slaughtering hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

Weapons Specialist Patricia Axelrod, who served in the Gulf, testified, "The U.S. had a perfect proving ground, a perfect enemy and a perfect living laboratory for testing new vaccines that we need for our own biological weapons industry. It's part of the Department of Defense's scheme to relinquish responsibility."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, more than a hundred thousand Gulf War veterans have reported horrible symptoms stemming from their stint in the Gulf.

Thus far officials have ignored the probability that the illnesses were caused by forced inoculations with experimental and genetically-engineered drugs interacting with radiation emitted from "depleted" uranium-coated artillery shells and tank armor—itsself a serious violation of the Geneva Conventions.

The government refuses to test Gulf veterans for radiation exposure, claiming that "without forethought and data, the financial implications of long-term disability payments and health-care costs would be excessive." Exposure to radiation via depleted uranium armaments is a key element of Gulf War Syndrome; I'll return to it in the last section of this article.

The Food and Drug Administration had given the Pentagon permission to administer experimental drugs to U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia without first obtaining their consent. "This is the first time since World War II that any government in the world has said that it would give experimental drugs to competent adults without consent," said George Annas, director of the Health, Law and Ethics program at the Boston University Schools of Law and Public Health.<sup>4</sup>

One of the drugs administered was atropine sulfate. The soldiers were told it would prevent them from being affected by Iraq's nerve gas. This is not true. Nor were they told that exposure to it could lead to serious illness, or that use of atropine in a hot environment significantly increases a person's risk of heat stroke. One wonders what impact it had on people wearing chemical suits in the desert, and what the long-term side-effects will be?

## Against Their Will

Other drugs were administered to the soldiers without their consent. A number of soldiers report being held down while being injected against their will. The government has thus far refused to release all the details, claiming that wartime stress, and, as a fallback position, inadvertent exposure to chemical weapons, not inoculations or radiation, was the major factor in most of the ailments. But Dr. Katherine Murray Leisure, an infectious disease specialist at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, counters that position.

"There was an outpouring in late 1991 and 1992 of Gulf war veterans with the exact same constellation of complaints—

intestinal, bone and joint, skin lesions—without having spoken to each other," she said. Dr. Leisure said it was clear that battlefield stress had little to do with the vets' ailments. "Stress, she said, "is an easy diagnosis that puts the onus on the patient." (NY Times 11/26/96)

The soldiers themselves have been able to fill in some of the gaps. They speak of being forced to take "alternative malaria pills," and an anti-nerve gas medication called pyridostigmine bromide, sometimes against their will and almost always without their consent.

In a pathbreaking story in *The Nation*, investigative journalist Laura Flanders reported that "according to Dr. Barry Wilson, a pharmaceutical scientist at Battelle Pacific Northwest Laboratories in Washington, pyridostigmine initially stimulates muscular strength and activity but eventually decreases nerve action, possibly resulting in paralysis. Side effects are known to include watering of the eyes, diarrhea and the urge to urinate, as well as allergic reactions from skin rashes to loss of hair and muscle control." The Department of Defense decided to use this drug "even though research with mice indicated that the drug does not protect but rather works with the nerve agent Sarin to cause greater damage."

"Under FDA regulations, pyridostigmine must be administered with careful monitoring, but the agency gave the Pentagon a waiver to use the drug randomly in the Gulf." As a result, the 697,000 U.S. troops who served in the Gulf from August 1990 to March 1991 were ordered not to give blood when they returned to the U.S. For more than a year blood banks refused to accept blood from Gulf war veterans, despite severe blood shortages.<sup>5</sup>

## Add Radioactivity and Stir

Now, put all of the above into a radioactive environment, and stir. The U.S. seemingly escaped the Gulf war with few direct casualties. "Only" 376 U.S. troops were killed in the Gulf, almost all of them by other U.S. soldiers—so-called "friendly fire." While 3,700 Iraqi tanks were obliterated, only 14 U.S. M1A1 Abrams tanks were destroyed—again by "friendly fire" from other M1A1s.

All of the U.S. and Iraqi tanks destroyed in the conflict were hit by a new kind of ammunition used for the first time in any war: shells encased in "depleted uranium" (DU), which combust on impact spraying large areas with radioactive clouds of deadly uranium dioxide. This makes the Gulf War something new: the world's first "low intensity" nuclear war.

For the first time since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, radioactive weapons were used against people. The United States shot more than a million shells encased in depleted uranium throughout Iraq and Kuwait. Deployed as tank armor, and as armor-penetrating ammunition by M1A1 Abrams tanks and A-10 attack planes, DU, which is 16 times denser than lead, proved so effective that not a single U.S. tank was destroyed by Iraqi fire. In addition, "artillery pieces, armored personnel carriers and other equipment destroyed by DU rounds number in the thousands. By the war's end, roughly 300 tons of uranium from spent rounds lay scattered in various sizes and states of decay across the battlefields of Iraq and Kuwait."

Depleted uranium is a highly toxic and radioactive by-product of the uranium enrichment process used for nuclear reactors

and in the manufacture of nuclear weapons. The Pentagon says DU is relatively harmless, emitting "only" 60 percent of the radiation of non-depleted uranium. But tests done by Dr. Ernest Sternglass, Jay Gould and Benjamin Goldman have shown that even low-level radiation emitted during the normal functioning of nuclear power plants creates havoc with people's immune systems as well as the surrounding environment.<sup>7</sup>

## Similar To Radiation Sickness

According to independent scientists, "a DU antitank round outside its metal casing can emit as much radiation in one hour as fifty chest X-rays." A tank driver receives a radiation dose of 0.13 mrem/hr to his or her head from overhead DU armor, which may seem like a very low dose. However, after 32 continuous days, or 64 12-hour days, "the amount of radiation a tank driver receives to his head will exceed the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual standard for public whole-body exposure to man-made sources of radiation. Unfortunately, U.S. tank crews were not monitored for radiation exposure" during the Gulf war.

When properly encased, the Pentagon says DU gives off very little radiation. But DU becomes much more radioactive when it burns. When fired, it combusts on impact. As much as 70 percent of the material is released as a radioactive and highly toxic dust that can be inhaled or ingested and then trapped in the lungs or kidneys. One researcher found that a single molecular particle of depleted uranium will subject an individual to radiation at a level 800 times what is permitted by federal regulations for external exposure.

As DU-artillery shells heat up, the uranium becomes aerosolized, releasing high amounts of radioactivity—not the low amounts the military claims for "normal" depleted uranium—in clouds of deadly uranium dioxide. Leaving more than 600,000 pounds of depleted uranium scattered throughout the region, by war's end the U.S. turned the Gulf area into a deadly radioactive grid, affecting not only U.S. soldiers but hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of people who live in the Gulf. Is it any wonder that many symptoms of Gulf War Syndrome are so similar to radiation sickness?

Radioactivity inflicts severe damage on the total environment while weakening immune systems, destroying kidneys, lungs, bones and liver, and rendering the human body susceptible to all sorts of diseases a healthy individual is able to ward off. A secret report by the British government estimated that the use of depleted uranium weapons in the Gulf could alone account for 500,000 deaths in the region. The report was based on estimates that 25 tons of depleted uranium munitions had been used; in actuality, the Department of Defense now estimates that the U.S. fired more than 12 times that amount.

The U.S. used its own soldiers as guinea pigs, permanently destroyed the ecology of the region and left an ongoing legacy of childhood leukemia, birth defects and poisoned water for civilians living there. And the U.S.—as it did in unnecessarily dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki—made such horror the norm for future conflicts.

The U.S. Department of Defense has more than 1.1 billion pounds of nuclear waste in storage from fifty years of nuclear

weapons production and nuclear power plants. The government, hemmed in by public opposition, health and environmental concerns, is always trying to find new "acceptable" ways to dispose of it. It has apparently found one. Billions of dollars allotted to the Environmental Restoration branch of the Department of Energy for cleaning up nuclear waste sites is now being used to ship nuclear waste free of charge to munitions manufacturers all over the world to be "recycled" into weapons.

Many countries have already begun manufacturing DU weapons. It would not be surprising to learn of mega-profits and an enormous cover-up of the development of uranium weaponry. Where is it being produced? What companies stand to profit from it?

Tod Ensign exposed the role of giant pharmaceutical companies such as "Hoffman-LaRoche and other manufacturers of the vaccines given GIs [who] work[ed] behind the scenes to contain the government investigation of Gulf veterans' health problems." It is likely that depleted uranium weapons and genetically engineered inoculations combined to cause what we now call Gulf War Syndrome. The horrors the U.S. military inflicted on the people of Iraq are returning as avenging specters. The human cost to the U.S. of its venture in the Gulf increases daily, as new U.S. casualties are discovered—cancers, birth defects, tumors, broken lives.

Mitchel Cohen is author of *Gulf War Syndrome: The U.S. Government's Secret Experimentation with Biological and Chemical Warfare*, available from him at 2652 Cropsey Ave., #7H, Brooklyn NY 11214. A longer, more completely footnoted version of this essay is available from Mitchel.

## Endnotes

1. Ad Hoc Committee on EMR Weapons, PO Box 4541, Ithaca NY 14852.

2. See my essay, "The Government's Secret War: A History of Experimentation with Biological & Chemical Warfare," available from available from the author.

3. Patricia Axelrod, a weapons specialist with a ten-year history of writing and research, in a study funded by the MacArthur Foundation. Laura Flanders, "Biological Experimentation in the Gulf War," reprinted by the Red Balloon Collective from *The Nation*.

4. *Storm Warning*, (Vietnam Veterans Against the War/Anti-Imperialist), 1991. While making a valid point, Annas unfortunately fails to mention the many instances of government experimentation on unsuspecting people—the smallpox-ridden blankets given to American Indians; the Tuskegee syphilis experiments on southern Black male prisoners; sensory deprivation units for political prisoners at Florence, Colorado, Marion, Illinois and Lexington, Kentucky; the testing of Hepatitis vaccines on American Indians; the Edmonstone-Zagreb, or E-Z measles vaccine, tested in Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Guinea, and more than a dozen other Third World countries as well as West and East Los Angeles and Inglewood; the testing of birth-control pills on Puerto Rican and Haitian women by the G.D. Searle pharmaceutical company in 1956; and the forcible injections of Haitian women imprisoned by the U.S. at its naval base at Guantanamo Bay with Depo Provera, an experimental drug with dangerous side effects.

5. Laura Flanders, *ibid*. See also Todd Ensign, "Guinea Pigs & Disposable GIs," *Covert Action*, Winter 1992-93.

6. Dan Fahey, "Collateral Damage: How U.S. Troops Were Exposed to Depleted Uranium During the Persian Gulf War, in *Metal of Dishonor: Depleted Uranium: How the Pentagon Radiates Soldiers and Civilians with DU Weapons*, International Action Center, 1997. Fahey is a director of the National Depleted Uranium Citizens' Network of the Military Toxics Project (MTP), PO Box 845, Sabattus, ME 04280; (207) 375 8482.

7. Jay M. Gould and Benjamin A. Goldman, *Deadly Deceit: Low Level Radiation, High Level Cover-Up*, Four Walls Eight Windows Press, 1990; Dr. Ernest J. Sternglass, *Nuclear Radiation & The Destruction of the Immune System*, Red Balloon Collective, 1993; and, Sternglass, *Low Level Radiation: The story of one scientist's attempt to call public attention to radiation damage to infants and the unborn*, Ballantine Books, 1972.



## Detroit Strike Continues

Continued from page 7

charges, compliantly accepted this without protest, as well as the fate of 50 workers fired outright during the strike for picket line militancy.

Leftists endlessly declare it is union bureaucrats who are holding back labor struggles and class consciousness, but brokering labor to capital and then disciplining its administration has been the function of unions since their inception. The bureaucrats running the labor racket sabotage strikes and militancy, but they've been doing this for a 100 years. Any strike worth remembering not only had to take on the company, cops and courts, but the unions as well.

The nature of the beast is fixed both by function and by law and no amount of organizing or haranguing workers by socialists is going to alter this. One would think that after a century of failed strategies to transform the nature of unions, they'd give up.

Even though the call for blockades in June was a flop, autonomous organizing



A giant puppet and street theater procession on Detroit's Belle Isle Sept. 7, followed an Art & Revolution conference. The theme was, "Whose city is this?"  
—photo/Federico Arcos

outside of the official union apparatus is the only path which holds any hope. The strikers' independent coalition has geared up again for more action against company and scab targets and appears to have no intention to relent. Who knows; maybe the new atmosphere will recreate the context for mass struggle against the newspapers even at this late date.—E.B. Maple

## News Just Received As We Go To Press: New Execution Date Near For Mumia Abu-Jamal Stop This Legal Lynching

Philadelphia's hanging judge has rejected another appeal by Mumia Abu-Jamal, setting the stage for a new execution date to be scheduled for the imprisoned ex-Black Panther.

As expected, on July 24, Judge Albert F. Sabo found the defense testimony of Pamela Jenkins, a key witness for Mumia, "entirely devoid of credibility," and said even if she were credible, it would not matter. Sabo once again denied Mumia's petition that charges be dropped and his death sentence overturned, or minimally that a new trial be granted, in the 1981 death of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner.

On August 29 Mumia's attorneys filed a brief in Pennsylvania Supreme Court contesting Sabo's "inplacable bias."

The proceedings reached a new level of unfairness as Sabo openly colluded with the prosecution to block Mumia from presenting evidence to support his claim of police misconduct. Sabo quashed all defense subpoenas, stating "I don't care who you subpoenaed." Despite this, Mumia was able to present further proof that the major prosecution witness, Cynthia White, was a police informant who the cops coerced into falsely identifying him as the shooter.

Mumia's attorneys say the Pennsylvania Supreme Court will have everything it needs by mid-October to render what is widely expected to be a rejection of his appeal. Governor Thomas Ridge, a strong capital punishment advocate, is expected to quickly sign another death warrant and set a date for Mumia's execution. Mumia's attorneys will be forced then to go to federal court for an emergency stay. The battle for Mumia's life and freedom is once again coming down to the wire.

Sabo allowed the testimony of Jenkins, a former prostitute, only after being ordered to do so by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Jenkins was a key government witness in a 1995 federal investigation of massive police corruption in Philadelphia which implicated dozens of officers and led to overturning hundreds of cases. This June, she testified that Cynthia White, the only witness who claimed to have seen Mumia holding a gun, was a police informant in 1981 and feared for her life from the police following the Faulkner shooting.

Jenkins said she was pressured to falsely identify Mumia as the shooter of Faulkner although she was not present at the scene. Furthermore, she testified she saw White in March 1997 accompanied by two former police officers—the same two who had pressured her to testify against Mumia in 1982.

Jenkins testified White was also a prostitute who worked for and was protected by the police at a time when the police controlled prostitution in Philadelphia's City Center. Mumia's defense was never informed of the relationship between White and the cops, and is, in itself, sufficient legal basis for a new trial.

In other startling new information, Jenkins stated police told her four police officers were present when Faulkner was shot. The prosecution has always maintained no other police were present. The defense investigation discovered a witness, Marcus Cannon, who was on the street at the time of the incident. He says he saw two white men on the street, then saw a flash, heard shots, and witnessed the two men draw guns and run toward the shooting. Cannon also saw a black male run east from the site, verifying the testi-

## НА ГОГОЛЬСКОМ БУЛЬВАРЕ

## On Gogol Boulevard

### WHERE'S OGB BEEN?

For several issues of the *Fifth Estate*, On Gogol Boulevard (OGB) produced a two-page spread on former Eastern Bloc and Third World anti-authoritarian struggles. However, due to numerous glitches, we're missing from the FE again except for these short items. But, by next issue we should be back. In the meantime, OGB is available on our website shared with other New York City anarchist groups: <http://Flag.Blackened.net/agonny>.

OGB-type info is also available from the Alternative Network for Eastern Europe list: send an e-mail saying SUBSCRIBE ALTER-EE to [listserv@plearn.edu.pl](mailto:listserv@plearn.edu.pl). Neither East Nor West is at [BobNenwOgb@aol.com](mailto:BobNenwOgb@aol.com).

And yes, computers do suck!  
Also, OGB used to mail 250 copies of the FE and other papers which carried our section to mainly East and Third World sources. However, because of a lack of funds we haven't done a mailing in over a year. Please send contributions for postage and other costs to maintain OGB's work to Neither East Nor West, c/o Sub-Commandante "b" oB McGlynn, 528 5th St., Brooklyn NY 11215; 718-499-7720.

### Russian Police Attack Anarchists

Renegade and organized police harassment of activists in Russia is rampant and there is almost no recourse against it.

In Volgodonski, about 50 anti-nuclear activists from The Rainbow Keepers were attacked by 500 - 600 nuclear power plant workers, with the complicity of the police and local authorities. Many sustained serious injuries. All tents in their protest camp were set on fire and all photo and video cameras destroyed. The activists who wanted to report the incident were arrested. Last year people were attacked at the same site.

The Rainbow Keepers need help replacing equipment destroyed in the attack on their camp and for legal expenses.

In Moscow, four apartments, including that of U.S. activist Laure Akai, were raided, hers for the third time in as many months. The latest raid, committed while Akai was in New York City, comes on the heels of raids against well-known authoritarian leftists in the government's search for terrorists following a hot wave of political bombings in Moscow.

Computers, mailing lists, papers and personal items were seized. Police now are conducting a criminal investigation which amounts to carte blanche to harass anarchists and communists.

In the case of Akai, other personal items were taken. Her home is used for visitor housing as well as for seminars and meetings. The last two times, the police illegally entered the house with machine guns and responded to protests with threats including imprisonment, framing other anarchists for murder, eviction, staking out the place for draft evaders and promises to return for extortion money.

Laure needs to replace equipment to continue publishing anarchist magazines and to retrieve data concerning political repression in Belarus. Contributions can

be made to NENW. Laure's English language zine, *Samizdat Anonymous*, is available from Black Bread Press, P.O. Box 500, Moscow 107061, Russia.

### Czech Anarchist Charged with Attempted Murder

Anarchist militant Jez Vaclav was arrested in the Moravian town of Blansko on two attempted murder charges and "keeping illegal arms". On Saturday, July 6, Vaclav was attacked by two nazi-skinheads while erasing anti-anarchist slogans sprayed by local fascists. The two nazis attacked Vaclav brutally with clear intent to injure or kill him.

Vaclav drew his illegally owned gun and shot one bonehead in the shoulder, but the second one escaped. Police accused Vaclav of attempted double murder, claiming that the well known Blansko nazi skinheads were just "ordinary youngsters." Vaclav faces twenty years in prison if convicted.

Vaclav is one of the most active militant anarchists in Czechoslovakia and a famous antifascist activist. He was recently sentenced to two years conditional release for refusal to report for civil instead of military service.

Please contact the International Secretariat of the Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation. Send protest letters to your local Czech embassy demanding they drop charges against Vaclav.

U.S. Czech consulate telephone is: 212-535-8814; fax: 212-772-0586.

Several anarchist groups including NENW and RASH (Red And Anarchist Skinheads) held a successful picket for Vaclav at the New York Czech consulate on July 29.

See the CSAF webpage at: <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/1211/>.

mony of three other witnesses. Judge Sabo refused to permit Cannon to take the stand to corroborate Jenkins.

If the Jenkins hearing was a new low of unfairness for Mumia, a huge rally in San Francisco on August 16 was a new high. Proclaimed "Justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal Day" by Mayor Willie Brown, some 2,500 people demanded freedom for Mumia and welcomed home Geronimo ji Jaga (formerly Pratt). Featured speakers were Alice Walker, Leonard Weinglass, and Geronimo, who said, after a thunderous ovation, "I know Mumia is smiling right now and I want to convey on behalf of him and so many others, a deep, heart-

felt thanks that can hardly be put into words."

The final stage of the legal fight will be in federal court and will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Tax-deductible checks should be made out to the Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked "Jamal legal defense," and sent to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Ave., #115, New York NY 10023-5001. A hardback copy of Mumia's first book, *Live from Death Row*, will be sent to those who contribute \$100 or more.

FE Note: The above book is also available from the FE for \$10; all profits will be sent to Mumia's defense.



# Letters to the Fifth Estate

## Not Terror

To FE:

In the last issue of FE in the Letters section, FE made a comment that I really didn't understand, and as a P.O.W., I was somewhat disappointed with: "This paper has a long history of supporting political prisoners. Some of them committed acts of terror against the state." (emphasis added)

Why was the word terror used to describe our armed campaign? This would imply that we are terrorist. It is this type of language that gives credence to the KKKovernment's effort to criminalize the legitimacy of our armed struggle in order to justify our illegal imprisonment and their refusal to acknowledge our P.O.W. status. From the late 60s to the early 80s, the death or injury of a civilian has never occurred as a result of the Black Liberation Army. All targets were legitimate.

We are freedom fighters, armed combatants for the people. We are not terrorist nor do we commit acts of terror. The Oklahoma City bombing was an act of terror, a deliberate attack on civilians, children in particular. We have never targeted civilians or children.

Comrades, it is important that we stay conscious of the language we use in regards to the armed struggle. The word terror feeds into KKKovernment's propaganda. I trust that you comrades do understand my concerns.

Abdul Olugbala Shakur  
Crescent City, Calif.

## Don't Change

To The Fifth Estate:

On page 26 of the Summer issue you used one of my photos but changed the title. My title, "Government plan to hide natural land from developers," humorously criticizes governmental environment protection, which is rhetorical posturing, while giving it all away to corporate interests.

Your title, "Plan to hide wilderness from forest service and developers," not only misses the point, but can be construed as an anti-environment message. Furthermore, it is not humorous.

I'm delighted to see my images in print, but must insist that my titles not be changed. A change in title can completely change the meaning and intent of an image.

Richard Gallup  
Kirtland, Ohio

## AN OPEN LETTER TO T.A.Z. SNOBS

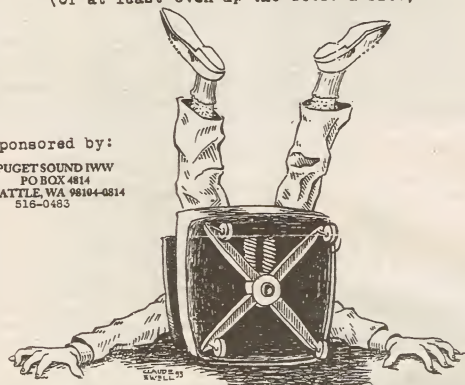
It started as a murmur and has become a caterwaul of opposition to the "found music" on the tapes "T.A.Z. Me Baby," sometimes labeled "Upper and Lower T.A.Z." "Walmart T.A.Z.," "a trip to the fat farm T.A.Z.," "a capitalist holiday," "bumper-sticker T.A.Z.," and "marriage encounter T.A.Z." are a few of the slurs hurled around the world. I wish to defend the criminal tape and the avenues explored, and, more importantly, clarify

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some evidential realities overlooked in the increasingly theological-style disputations over T.A.Z.

It now seems clear (there is a plethora of physical evidence as well as internal textual evidence) that the essay "The Temporary Autonomous Zone" was penned by Dorothea "Dottie" Wilcox Neal of Egypt Mills, Missouri, in 1982, using the nom de plume Hakim Bey. Some of the shorter pieces in T.A.Z. (published by Autonomedia) are also by Dottie, others were written by her friends in the Blackberry SYNDICATE. In the summer of 1996 Dottie agreed to be interviewed about her life and work. I am her authorized biographer and custodian of her papers, which will eventually be housed in the archives of Southeast Missouri State University. My interview illuminates the tape controversy and sheds light on what other "Hakim Beys" have published.

Dottie was knowledgeable about the later "Hakim Bey" essays discussing the implosion/explosion of the Soviet Union and the notion of the necessity of "jihad." She offered this: "There were never Two. So how could there now be One? It's probably the Federals trying to make trouble. Or, maybe it's just someone trying to get the girls to play strip poker again." Not that she was upset about the proliferation of "Hakims." "Let a hundred charlatans flower. Better a hundred than One. One, two, three, many Hakims."

And, what of the tapes? Dottie had heard of them, although she had not heard them. She told me that if they suggested that the T.A.Z. was "escapist, trivial and fun, so much the better. The T.A.Z. has always been something that one might fathom without tutelage at the knee of a ninety year-old Italian anarchist wearing a black wool suit." The T.A.Z., she continued, was "like one of those girls from Charleston, or Puxico, or Blytheville who come to the Cape to be waitresses: open, foolish, innocent, dangerous, and maybe worth your while, maybe not." Dottie went to college when exposure to William James was common—she graduated from Southeast Missouri State College in 1934—and reminded me of "James words" and "James phrases," which she noted could well be TAZWORDS and TAZPHRASES. (My spelling and emphasis.) Dottie began to recite like a school child who had memorized a poem:

CONDITIONAL, UNSTIFFEN, HOLIDAY-GIVING VALUE, GO-BETWEEN, FRUITS, WIDE WINDOW, FILLING THE CUP OF CONCRETENESS TO THE BRIM, GENIAL, OPEN AIR, NOVELTY, UTTERS, THIS MOONLIT AND DREAM-VISITED PLANET

With that last enunciation, Dottie called an end to the interview, and led a party of a half-dozen to Indian Creek for rock

throwing, singing, wading, and belly flopping. For sustenance we had beer, ham sandwiches, and, of course, blackberry cobbler. The afternoon gave way to a crescent moon before we had our fill. It was my only visit, all too temporary a dip in the BLACKBERRY SYNDICATE ZONE.

### Biographical facts:

Dorothea Wilcox Neal, 1912-1997  
b. Cape Girardeau, Missouri, April 18, 1912  
B.S., Education, Southeast Missouri State College, 1934  
married, J.J. "Jess" Neal, 1941. no children  
employed, Louis Lorimer Elementary, Cape Girardeau, 1935-1965  
d. Egypt Mills, Missouri, January 4, 1997

H. R. "Raoul" Huebello  
Professor of History  
TAMUK  
Kingsville, Texas 78363

## Where's Albania?

Fifth Estate:

Why nothing on Albania? For once we got some real anarchy happening and you don't even mention it. What's up? It began three months ago; you had time.

Benny Profane  
On the Road

## Catch Murray

Dear Fifth Estate:

Max Cafard's piece on Murray Bookchin is brilliantly hilarious, of *Catch 22* caliber. His style and wit, apart from the content, caused me to laugh out loud, a rare response to a political essay.

I am not versed enough to address most of the issues, neither being in the movement nor having read Bookchin's book nor the review by David Watson. Nonetheless, I am persuaded that the case against Bookchin has been made even though my inbred political instincts would make me gravitate more towards Bookchin or Barry Commoner. (I don't know if FE lumps them together or not.)

I saw Bookchin only once. He, Commoner and Kirkpatrick Sale constituted a panel at the Socialist Scholars Conference in New York some years ago. I recall that Bookchin (and Commoner) were abusive to Sale and I believe rudeness is a trait only of human beings. Sale did concede that one or more leading deep ecologists had written or endorsed anti-Semitic tracts.

My only other knowledge of Bookchin is his 1971 introduction to *The Kronstadt Uprising* by Ida Mett. It was not great literature and evoked no smiles, but I agreed with his analysis.

Larry Hochman  
Livonia, Mich.

**FE Note:** Larry Hochman was the 1968 Michigan running mate of Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver who ran for President that year on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket.

More letters on Next Page



## No Need To Fight?

Dear FE:

By the late 1970s it was dawning on some of us that all the varieties of leftism were somehow lacking in a basic way. The deepening sorrow of social existence prompted a critique of technological civilization, in sum, in the absence of an adequate existing outlook.

From that time and throughout much of the 1980s, the Fifth Estate folks pretty much alone carried forth this project or inquiry, as the rest of the anarchist milieu was then dominated by productionist, largely syndicalist, perspectives. Much has changed since, including, it seems, a growing discomfort with the implications of the deeper critique on the part of those who did so much to develop it. The FEers have been shrinking from those further points, I would say, that the trajectory of civilization is now implying with insistence.

Along these lines, the long, rambling article, "The Unabomber & the future of technological society" (Fall 1996), looks for ways to distance FE from the notion of standing up for the type of person or persons who would actually strike back at the Megamachine.

More than once, for example, author T. Fulano indicates that the Unabomber targets were pretty much innocent victims. This assertion shows that he is either ignorant of the facts, or, contrary to past FE orientation, believes that those who design, promote, or execute the destruction of the individual and the ecosphere are to be seen as innocents.

When he says of the Unabomber, "I do not know what should be done to such people or for them..." he sounds to me like a patronizing liberal. And, taking for his model the taoist sage who counsels "not ... to destroy what exists but to preserve what is perishing," Fulano strikes an oddly affirmative note. Techno-capital is not as monstrous as FE has long said it is? No need to fight to dismantle it? I see no hope to save nature and humanness except by taking on the whole apparatus and eradicating it. How else will health and freedom be possible?

I disagree with details of FC's "Industrial Society and its Future," but see its core argument as completely valid and essential. It has brought a continuing dialog of unknown proportions including recent "manifesto" editions in French, Japanese and Turkish. Without the Unabomber attacks few if any would have heard of this treatise or been introduced to the fundamental questions it raises.

Violence is always ugly and never to be

treated lightly. Consider the children poisoned by pervading toxicity, so many women facing breast cancer, young people being marched into devitalizing, artificialized roles in a more and more barren world, the millions living in deepening personal desolation, species disappearing forever at an accelerating rate. Is the Unabomber, who took up arms to oppose this nightmare, among the criminal?

To do other than take sides would constitute for me a betrayal of what I know about social reality and all my yearning to change it. I commend the public discussion prompted and the courage shown by Green Anarchist and Unapack partisans among others, and appreciate the forum provided by Fifth Estate.

John Zerzan  
Eugene, Ore.

## General Witlessness

To Fifth Estate:

"When I hear the word love," Gore Vidal said somewhere, "I reach for my revolver," and one understands the reflex after reading T. Fulano's dismissal of the Unabomber as not an authentic revolutionary because he is not "guided by great feelings of love," to quote one of Fulano's boyhood heroes who remains curiously unnamed, perhaps because the hero is none other than Che Guevara, whose "great feelings of love" made him early on determine to eradicate cannabis cultivation in the Cuban mountains by summarily shooting pot-growing peasants.

Given the general witlessness of anarchists, Fulano may expect this sort of incoherence to pass unnoticed, but to others less critically challenged it represents a rather neat, if altogether unsurprising, confirmation of FC's disdain for leftist cant.

And for those revolted by confinement to routines required for survival in a cruel, senseless, ugly and exhausting world, Fulano's fulminations against rage are just the latest answer to the question, "What's so funny about peace, love and understanding."

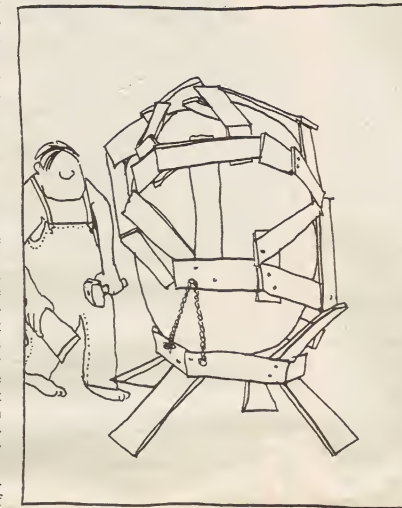
Dan Todd  
Tucson, Ariz.

T. Fulano responds: I'm sorry I sound like a patronizing liberal to John Zerzan if I happen to consider the Unabomber to be more a symptom of the social and psychic decomposition brought about by industrial capitalism than a sane response to it. He seems to think that not supporting sending bombs through the mail to carry out arbitrary death sentences against grudge targets makes one a supporter of the megamachine. Somehow, the people killed and injured by the Unabomber (and those who might have been killed if other bombs had worked) are more guilty of what is happening to humanity and nature than several million others who also participate in some way or another in the machine. Zerzan doesn't explain how the owner of a computer store, a university professor's student assistant or a secretary merits a death sentence, or how exactly such bombings represent a meaningful way to "strike back."

He argues eloquently that the violence of the Unabomber is nothing compared to the massive, pervasive violence of megatechnic capital, adding that the Unabomber manifesto makes valid argu-

ments—as if I hadn't made these very points in my essay. I just don't share his apparent conclusion that the enemy of my enemy is therefore my friend.

Dan Todd hasn't learned how to read if he thinks, as he insinuates, that I intended to conceal the identity of Che Guevara by not naming him while quoting or paraphrasing his two most famous and recognizable lines. I'm not ashamed to say that Che was one of my adolescent heroes—I



drawing/Gerald Burns

don't know who Todd's were. Call it "leftist cant," if you will, but I wish to preserve the nuance and context in remembering my roots in the New Left, whatever its limitations. Todd thinks this sensibility confirms the Unabomber manifesto's "disdain" for leftism, which is expressed in passages like the following: "Leftists tend to hate anything that has an image of being strong, good and successful"; consequently, leftists "hate America, they hate Western Civilization, they hate white males, they hate rationality..." The leftist is antagonistic to the concept of competition because, deep inside, he feels like a loser." Somehow, I think anti-authoritarians have already done better in critiquing leftism than that confused venting of resentment suggests.

Che was a cultural icon of a generation of young radicals who fervently believed we were going to overthrow the most powerful empire in history. His cult reflected our naiveté and (sometimes misguided) idealism. Maybe I tried to be too subtle, but that was something I assumed would be understood by my readers. I wasn't taking responsibility for Che's authoritarian politics by quoting a line (at least one of the two I quoted) that made perfect sense. Che eventually became a strange, messianic, even Christ-like figure in his death (murdered, like so many others, by the CIA), but certainly one could have identified with worse people in those days.

Today the Unabomber has also become a cultural icon, messianic and strangely Christ-like ("He tried to save us," writes one anti-authoritarian theoretician I also will not name) though the cynicism with which innocence has now mingled is a distinctly 1990s phenomenon, as my es-

say shows. There are worse figures to identify with nowadays, too, but in bringing in the question of motives and context I was attempting to add some measure of caution to our tendency toward messianic rage. Since Todd addresses neither issue meaningfully, I imagine he feels no such ambivalence—the logic of every potential executioner.

## Ted Normal As Me

Dear Fifth Estate:

You may recall that an ex-CIA man named Wilson, some years ago, corralled tons of C-4, the most powerful non-atomic explosive known, and shipped it to Khadafi. He followed it over and set up a school to teach little terrorists how to make and use state-of-the-art bombs hidden in hand-held calculators, telephones, that kind of thing.

The CIA and FBI (whose job it is to track large shipments of explosives) looked the other way. Those bombs are still showing up everywhere around the world—France, England—killing people, including dissident Libyans living abroad. Wilson made a great deal of

money, a millionaire many times over, and made friends with a great many Senators and Congressmen.

He went to jail eventually, and as far as I know no Department of Justice official ever thought of suggesting a death penalty for him.

Ted Kaczynski may not be the Unabomber. If he isn't, the real one may be dead or laying low. Kaczynski was a fair match for the earliest FBI profiles, but certainly not the ones the San Francisco Task Force—the experts—decided to go with. Some of the evidence they wrote him off as a suspect, with luck, still exists.

But now he's arrested, with a full display of Justice show-trial tactics—leaks from anonymous "high officials" saying he's it, sinister spins on every aspect of his solitary life (the solitude itself unintelligible to people who mount Task Forces and use words like that), and it's clear the prosecution, in spite of shaky evidence and evidence acquired by shakier means, can best be called vindictive. They'll stick him with a death penalty if they can.

Their lab experts will look defense lawyers in the eye and swear their results (if relevant to the case, and a lot of what they'll drag in won't be) are "beyond the shadow of a doubt." They will lie, if they have to, in the interest of solidarity. Likely they'll hint, yet again, at conspiracy connections with environmental groups. In Sacramento they try anything, and hope some of it sticks.

I can't but compare how Kaczynski's case is going to go with the government attitude (inferable from publicity at the time and the sentence given) to the trial and imprisonment of Mr. Wilson. The more corporate you are, the more imagin-

## Fifth Estate Letters Policy

The Fifth Estate always welcomes letters commenting on our articles, stating opinions, or giving reports of events in local areas. We don't guarantee we will print everything we receive, but all letters are read by our staff and considered.

Typed letters or ones on disk are appreciated, but not required. Length should not exceed two, double-spaced pages. If you are interested in writing a longer response, please contact us.



able as part of the system, the lighter the sentence. Wilson wanted a huge estate near Washington, and acquired it by his dealings. This made perfect sense to his captors. They wouldn't mind having the same. Ted barely made the taxes on his little shack, lived the life of a poor person in it. When the first news hit the papers a day or two after the arrest, the government attitude toward poverty was patent, and chilling. Ted had to be guilty, they implied, because he lived that way.

Nuts to that. Kaczynski lived in the same building I did our freshman year at Harvard. He was as normal as I am now; it was harder on him because he was much younger than his classmates. I too have ended up living way below the poverty line, and all that means is I know a bit more about living that way than Ted's prosecutors, with their lunches and Task Forces. If Ted were a quarter as smart, he'd still be tempted to see them as buffoons.

Gerald Burns (Harvard Class of '62)  
Portland, Ore.

## Oh No, More Murray

Dear FE:

Superb job once again in printing Max Cafard's review of Murray Bookchin's latest trendy fiction novel ("Bookchin Agonistes," Summer 1997 FE). I guess you saw subcommander Dan Coleman's review of *Beyond Bookchin* in the April edition of Z magazine. It never dealt with any of the serious issues David Watson raised, simply closed ranks behind the Big Man; typical groupie behavior.

I heard from the folks at AK Press (FE note: publishers of Bookchin's screed, *Social Anarchism vs. Lifestyle Anarchism*) that Bookchin will probably respond to Watson in book form to likely be published sometime next year.

One final thought: why the *nom de plume* "Max Cafard," when everyone knows that "Bookchin Agonistes" was written by John Clark? It details history that Clark had as an early-later tentative supporter of bookchinism, and could only make sense in that context.

I can understand the use of assumed names for monkeywrenchers or whatnot, but for philosophical treatises like Clark/Cafard's, or those of David Watson/George Bradford/Primitivo Solis, etc., etc., I can think of no valid reason for this all too common, ultimately incoherent practice.

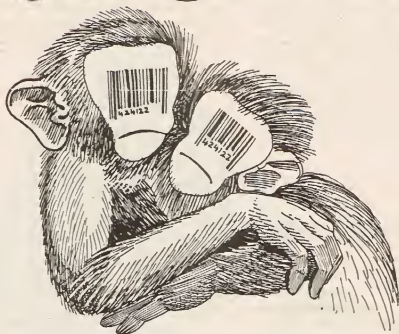
Bill McCormick  
Charlottesville, Va.

**Max Cafard replies:** No, Bill McCormick, I am not John Clark in disguise. In fact, I do not even talk to Clark, since I consider him to be a boring, academic, domesticated pseudo-radical. He writes for such brain-dead types as the American Philosophical Association, that organization of intellectual insurance salesmen, ex-marxists and other denizens of the Limbo of Lost Leftists.

## Don't Lose the Fifth Estate

If you move but don't notify us directly, you will miss the next issue. Second class mail is not forwarded, even if you notify the Post Office. Please write us before moving and include your old address and zip.

# NO CLONE



Furthermore, Clark wasted so much time apologizing for Murray Bookchin and the Bookchin Institute for Social Ecology (ISE) cult that his mind is almost hopelessly normalized. He desperately needs to seek help from Anarcho-holics Anonymous to bring him back to surreality. For years Clark refused to expose the absurdities of Bookchinism, because, he implausibly claims, some fanatical deep ecologist kept sending him insane, ranting attacks on Bookchin that actually made that Stalinist of the Mind seem relatively coherent and rational.

I, on the other hand, have never defended Bookchin Thought in any way. In fact, I have never succumbed to either deep or social ecology. I proudly remain a shallow, antisocial ecologist. I love the shallow, mysterious swamp ecology of my native region. Who needs depth? I love the ecstatic community and the play of spiritual bodies in my multidimensional regionality. Society is a hoax!

So, as you can see, I am not, nor have I ever been, John Clark; nor have I been a card-carrying member of John Clark. I do, however, plan to disguise myself as John Clark next Mardi Gras.

**FE Note:** The June edition of Z contains a rebuttal by Watson of sycophant Coleman, mentioned in the above letter.

Other readers of both Z and the *Fifth Estate* sent us copies of the letters they wrote to Z protesting the review, but none were printed. One essay/review of *Beyond Bookchin* worth mentioning is Mitchel Cohen's *Listen Bookchin!*, available from him at 2652 Cropsey Avenue #7H, Brooklyn NY 11214, for \$3 (checks to Mitchel Cohen). This pamphlet is available as well through the FE bookservice.

## Without Rules

Dear Fifth Estate:

Good to see your new issue. Yes, almost as soon as we said the Bayou La Rose was going to go into hibernation we started to publish even more than we did before. I should have known better than to have written that, for the Bayou has always operated without rules or expectations.

What has happened is that a few friends that work deep within an office have been running it off on a copier and helping to mail it. For us the important thing has always been the information that we get out, so we just put things out as they come in. But this may change again because I have been given a computer, though I have worn out three people who have tried to get it up and running and teach me how to use the damn thing. Folks around here swear that they will bring me into the modern world kicking and screaming if necessary.

A lot has been going on out here. Our work with the Northwest Leonard Peltier Support Network has held 33 rallies in our region in 3 years. The next one will be another march on the U.S./Canadian border Oct. 12th. We are also helping with a march from the Puyallup nation to the Tacoma, Wash. police department over the murder of an Assiniboine-Lakota youth by Tacoma cops.

Last weekend we went down to Olympia where there was an activists conference. Most of it was very useful. The radical media in our region is going to begin to network. The only downer was a workshop put on by a Love and Rager who lectured us on what revolutionary anarchism was—that being the Love and Rage program and nothing else.

Imagine my surprise to learn that after being an anarchist for 30 years that I was not revolutionary because I don't fit into the correct line program. It seems to me that I have heard this before. . . oh yea, a few weeks ago from a RCP'er who said I was not revolutionary because I did not follow their program.

Now I am all for the rebellion of youth, but it is a little hard to take from someone younger than my daughter telling me that I have lead a meaningless life in years of struggle because I have not converted and become a born-again Love and Rager. It's not that I disagree with them on all things; it's just that I view anarchism as a diversity of ideas. Oh well, I have always been a bit of an outcast and outlaw all my life.

For anarchism without vanguard parties,

Arthur J. Miller  
Bayou La Rose  
P.O. Box 5464  
Tacoma, Wash. 98415-0464

**FE note:** Glad *Bayou* is up and running again. The Love & Rage situation is even worse than you intuited from your encounter with two of its militants.

The Love & Rage view of themselves as the unofficial vanguard of the anarchist movement was codified at a March conference in East Lansing, Michigan. Although only 70 people were in attendance (compare that to the *thousands* who used to attend pre-L&R anarchist gatherings) including observers, according to an article in their June/July self-titled newspaper the question was posed, "What is our relationship as a revolutionary organization to the movement/people at large?"

The answer? "[T]he role of an organization like Love and Rage (and something we already practice) is to provide leadership in movements to build power to the people." This is a victory for the neo-leninists and a reflection of the group's indelible stain of being formed by members of the defunct Revolutionary Socialist League and its alleged anarchist sympathizers.

Maybe even worse is a companion article appearing in the same issue entitled, "Building a Multi-Racial/Multi-National Revolutionary Anarchist Organization," which bemoans the current racial and class composition of L&R (white and middle-class). Their mechanistic strategy to transform their group reeks of the worst sort of instrumentalism, seeing individuals as representing culturally defined categories to be recruited.

There is not a single paragraph in the L&R document that does not read like a manipulative, bureaucratic leninist party position paper. They start with the idea that they "cannot imagine an anarchist revolution in the United States that is not multi-racial and multi-cultural"—who would disagree with that, or their determination to make "[s]mashing white supremacy and white privilege . . . a priority"?

But L&R is overwhelmingly white, and they want to lead the masses, so what is to be done? They mention the "recurring spectacle of self-appointed white vanguards, bringing the 'correct line' to people of color . . ." Yet their own formulation is a combination of white guilt and opportunism.

They want to "win . . . people of color" to their organization (as if the one thing lacking to people of color in liberating themselves is seventy white anarcho-leninist militants with a newspaper), because building their organization is supposedly the most important task of their revolutionary activity (sound familiar?). But their target audience is not joining up fast enough, so they advocate "Smashing (their group's) culture of whiteness."

Warning to the faithful: Here comes a witch hunt. What do they mean by "white culture"? That, obviously, is a question far more complex than seventy or a hundred or two hundred mostly white people can decide inside a test tube. It sounds like the kind of organizational internal terrorism some leftists have practiced, such as the Weatherman group's arbitrary decision to "smash monogamy."

One can only hope L&R militants won't be required to wear rap clothing and carry



boom boxes playing "Fight the Power," like the RCP youth they feel no qualms about forming alliances with. Maybe they'll call a plenum—or a trial—to work it all out.

This is a far cry from Malcolm X's famous declaration at Oxford that he didn't care what color you were, he was willing to work with anyone willing to smash the capitalist system.

Too harsh a judgement? The photo accompanying the latter article shows a "Communist Party-led sit-down strike" from the 1930s. Great organization for anarchists to model themselves on.

In fairness, L&R's vanguardism may be just the party big wigs blowing smoke. Locally, the four L&R members wrote a letter to the Trumbull Theater folks telling them they had no intention of trying to lead them nor did they consider themselves anything other than equals in the struggle.

## Slab Of Beef

FE Folks:

Thanks for the papers!! Unfortunately, I'm in the hole right now and am not allowed to attend our anarchist study group here. But the issues have been a lot of help to me and given me inspiration and things to think about.

I was kicking on the door of my cell because of the big slab of beef the guards put on my vegetarian tray among other things, when the guard slid your paper under my door. I was expecting to be gassed or at least yelled at, but when I realized they were Fifth Estates (and not just one but 4!!!) my heart rose.

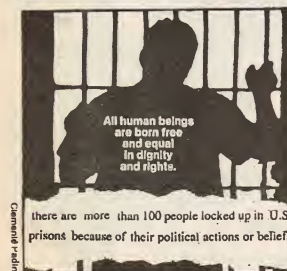
I'd like to express my appreciation for the inspiration you folks give me. I'd also like to thank you for the obituary in "Fallen Anarchist Comrades" (Fall 1996 FE) of one of my comrades, Richard "Tet" Tetenbaum. He was and still is a great inspiration for a lot of us in San Francisco.

In Solidarity,  
Chris "Spit" Gross  
Carson City, Nev.

## Still Broadcasting

To: Various supporters of Mbanna Kantako and Human Rights Radio (t/k/a Black Liberation Radio)—9 1/2 years and counting:

Local officials hopeful that the planned destruction of the John Hay Public Housing Project in Springfield, Ill. would also mean the end of Human Rights Radio were surely disappointed when Mbanna Kantako had the station up and broadcast-



**ATTENTION PRISONERS & GIs**  
If this is the first copy of the Fifth Estate you have received, it is only a sample. You must write back to be put on our free subscription list.

ing a mere 90 minutes after being forced to move last Saturday.

The Kantako family was the very last of 600 low-income Black families pushed out by a \$20,000,000 Urban Renewal Project that is nothing more than classic "Negro Removal." Seems these 2,000 poor Black folks were located much too near Lincoln's home and the downtown business and tourist district. While the local media formed a united front of silence concerning the real reasons behind the project, Kantako critically tore it apart in a series of programs he entitled "The Great Land Grab."

With the help of a surprisingly supportive landlord, Kantako, his family and a loyal listener with a ladder (and no fear of heights) installed the stick antenna on the roof of a two-story apartment house and resumed broadcasting with an even wider signal radius because of the increased height of the antenna than he had before the move.

Kantako believes this experience proves the versatility, thrift, and simplicity of micro radio. If a blind man with no technical expertise can do it, there is no reason ordinary citizens and not-for-profit groups across the country can't.

Kantako's new address is: Human Rights Radio, c/o Mbanna Kantako, 719 1/2 North Sixth Street, Springfield IL 62702; 217/527-1617. Give him a call or drop him a note of encouragement sometime.

Mike Townsend  
Springfield, Ill.

## False Perceptions

Brothers and Sisters of the Fifth Estate:

I am 30 years old and have been incarcerated in Nevada for nearly six years. I have recently been granted the privilege of reading your periodical and I am moved and enlightened by your movement.

I was raised in the Santa Cruz mountains in the California Bay area and have always considered myself an anarchist. However, after reading your paper along with some deep discussion with one of your Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) members here I discovered I have been led by false perceptions. I am almost ashamed to say that I have stood on strong racial views and regarded myself as a white separatist, not really seeing this as a form of oppression as I didn't view separatism with supremacy. I can only claim ignorance for these distorted views and educate myself towards the true anarchist movement.

I should be out of prison within the next two years and I wish to come out an enlightened anarchist. I truly abhor authority and the repressive society that we live in today. I am deeply interested in joining your ABC movement and subscribing to your paper. I have no money, but I do have heart, love and determination. I am a radical and am willing to do whatever it takes to help end oppression. I only need direction and education. Ignorance breeds oppression as I too well know. Thank you for being out there. Stay strong and live free.

Your brother in arms,  
Tim Johnson  
Carson City, Nev.

## Anarchy in Slovenia

Dear Fifth Estate:

We are a group of people, which repre-

sents a major part of Ljubljana's (capital of Slovenia) anarcho-punk scene. Our informal organization, Collective for Anarcho Pacifist Activities (CAPA), is now about 3-5 years old, and we must tell you that we did about 400 concerts, anti-McDonald's demonstration, anti-nuke demonstration. We also worked with Greenpeace project called No More Chernobyls and organized a demonstration against our nuclear plant Krsko, which was backed up with collecting of signatures for a referendum for closing a power plant.

Our base is in a squat called Metelkova in the center of Ljubljana. Metelkova was squatted in 1993, about 2 years after war in Slovenia which has spread later to other Yugoslavian republics. Fortunately, war in Slovenia lasted only 10 days and then Yugoslavian army left Slovenia forever. Metelkova is ex-military barracks, but is slowly changing to cultural center, and a center for underground, civil society movements.

We established CAPA to work on different projects. We wanted to work with punk rock, music, civil and political problems, ecology, fanzines. But unfortunately we were so busy with squat that we could do only concerts. We also opened a club called Gala Hala where we work and do concerts.

Now, we have developed our scene to the stage where we can do other things except concerts & concerts. This is also one of reasons why we are writing to you. We are trying to run an Info Shop in our club, like also through mailing, Internet. We would like to subscribe on your magazine and distribute it around Slovenia. We think your magazine is very badly presented around here and that we could do something about it.

CAPA  
Masarykova 24,  
1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

## Tales From The Planet

Continued from page 2

of testimony by 28 witnesses who affirmed the litany of abuse in the case by LA cops, prosecutor's office and federal officials. The FBI knew for years that Pratt was not at the murder scene since they had illegal wiretaps of his conversations 350 miles away, but kept the evidence suppressed.

We welcome Geronimo back to the minimum security confinement of everyday existence, but will never forget that a brutal, lying government took 27 years from his life. Other well-known militants remain in prison on frame-up charges such as Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier, but they are only the most well known.

Recognizing this as he left the Orange County Jail, Geronimo said, "You have political prisoners on top of political prisoners; I'm only one of a great many."

## Unabomber Trial

Theodore Kaczynski, accused of being the Unabomber, will face an anonymous jury Nov. 12 in Sacramento, Calif. at the start of his trial on federal bomb charges. Kaczynski's lawyers agreed on the need to protect jurors from outside influence

## @ Prison Library

Greetings:

I am an anarchist political prisoner held captive in the state of Texas on a fifteen-year sentence. I was arrested for my involvement in several antifascist actions. I am held as a close-custody (maximum security) prisoner which means I am not allowed out of my 7ft X 9ft cage except for two hours a day (though most days I don't even get those).

Three years ago I started dispersing anarchist literature around the prisons and over the years this little project has grown into the Texas Prisoners Anarchist Lending Library. I ran out of personal funds a long time ago (I depend on my support group and a few very kind anarchist brothers and sisters for my daily needs) and this is why I am writing you.

Those of us involved with the Library feel that your publication would be a great addition and ask that you offer a free sub. We ask this on the anarchist tenet of mutual aid and volunteer cooperation. If you do assist us here in the cages, please be sure the address on the envelope is the publishers or a bookstore.

Refuse, Resist, Exist!  
United Anarchist Front  
Christopher Lee Plummer  
PP#677345, Hughes Unit  
Rt. 2, Box 4400  
Gatesville TX 76597

FE note: Chris has been under fire from the prison administration and neo-Nazi prison gangs for his organizing work and direct action with the United Anarchist Front and Cell One, a revolutionary prisoners' group. Please send him your publications. Write the Chris Plummer Support Group, c/o Amy Lord, P.O. Box 21142, Spokane WA 99201; 509/323-0925 for information about his case.

such as the media, which has all but convicted Kaczynski. He is charged with 4 of the 16 bombings attributed to the mysterious, anti-technology avenger. He has pleaded not guilty and faces the death penalty if convicted.

## A New McLibel?

Bob Helms, a Philadelphia IWW activist, and *Harper's* magazine are being sued by Pittsburgh-based health giant Allegheny University for the Health Sciences (AU) for libel and slander.

Helms is an anarchist historian and publisher of *Guinea Pig Zero* (GPZ), a jobline for volunteer research study participants. The suit resulted from Harper's excerpting a GPZ report card on pharmaceutical human study units which slammed the unit acquired as part of AU's recent buying frenzy (over 25 hospitals and medical schools).

Harper's publicly apologized to AU as well as settled out of court for an undisclosed sum. Helms is holding firm for a court date: "I'll make them eat crow," he says. GPZ is available from P.O. Box 4253, Philadelphia. PA 19101; \$3/issue; \$10 a year, four issues.

Hey, how about some nonlegal news? Philadelphia's Wooden Shoe Books has found new quarters following a disastrous fire in February 1997. They're now at 508 S. 5th St.; 215-569-2477.



# Civilization

Do you think it will go on forever?

The foul city spreading its ugly suburbs like an ink-blot over the fresh green woods and meadows,

Its buildings climbing up to ten, twenty, thirty shapeless stories,

Its lurid smoke smothering the blue sky;

The mad rushing hither and thither, by steam and electricity, as of insects on a stagnant pool, ever faster and faster;

Forests falling in a day to fill the world with waste paper;

Presses turning out aimless books and magazines and newspapers by the ton;

Factory chimneys poisoning the west wind with unnamed stench;

Dark pollution from chemical works and sewers sucking up the limpid purity of our streams;

Squalid brick-yards eating like leprosy into the banks of the river;

Coal-mines belching forth black vomit over whole counties;

The endless labor of digging gold and silver out of their natural deposits under the distant mountain and heaping them up in unnatural and equally useless deposits under our sidewalks;

The raging whirl of machinery forever whirling its tasteless, shoddy, adulterated products into the laps of the idle;

Stalwart country folk, lured into overcrowded slums, to be bleached and stifled and enervated in the slavery of dull toil;

The army of tramps and unemployed swelling, suicides multiplying, starvation widening in the wake of steam yachts and auto-cars of multi-millionaires;

Prisons, poorhouses, insane asylums, hospitals, and armories growing bigger and bigger;

And get in all this wild, material maelstrom scarcely a glimmer of art or beauty or dignity or repose or self-respect—

Do you think it can go on forever?

Do you think it ought to go on forever?

Ernest Crosby (1856-1907)

